Author:
Mishiro, Ayumi

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William Wordsworth and Education, 1791 – 1802

by

Ayumi Mishiro

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Abstract

This thesis adopts a detailed biographical approach to William Wordsworth's engagement with education in the years 1791 - 1802. I suggest that the complex and changing nature of Wordsworth's engagement with educational principles and practices is central to an understanding of his developing conception of poetry and poetics. I am as concerned to discover continuities as to remark on changes in Wordsworth's educational ideas and practice.

Chapter One highlights how the education of Wordsworth differs from the existing systems, and is in effect a prelude to my discussion of the poet's belief that the reform of educational systems was necessary for a thoroughgoing reform of society. Chapter Two focuses on Wordsworth's political and literary activities in January 1791 - April 1795, which led him to understand that the progress of human improvement should be dependent upon a properly educated population. Chapter Three traces the development of Wordsworth's conception of poetry and poetics through his engagement with educational principles and practices in spring 1795 - July 1797. Chapter Four considers how Wordsworth elaborated his ideals of poetic education through his discussions with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Thelwall, and Tom Wedgwood, and examines how in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* he established himself as a 'poet-preceptor' encouraging each reader to form his or her aesthetic and ethical code. My final chapter explores the changes in Wordsworth's educational method since September 1798 until the publication of the 1802 *Lyrical Ballads*. I suggest that in trying to write *The Prelude* and to thus individuate himself from the public, Wordsworth became increasingly sceptical about the reader's ability to be enlightened by his poems. The thesis concludes by defining the 1802 *Lyrical Ballads* as the 'poet-preceptor' Wordsworth's last experiment in the enlightenment of the reader and also as a departure from his first principles of poetic education.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the thesis has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

The thesis has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNED: Ayumi Mishiro DATE: 12 December 2001

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Abbreviations

'Advertisement'	The 'Advertisement' to the 1798 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*
Averill	James H. Averill, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980)
Bowen	James Bowen, 'Education, ideology and the ruling class: Hellenism and English public schools in the nineteenth century', in *Rediscovering Hellenism: The Hellenic Inheritance and the English Imagination*, ed. by Graeme W. Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 161 - 186
Chandler	James K. Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature: A Study of the Poetry and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984)
CL	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E.L.Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71)
Clancey	Richard W. Clancey, *Wordsworth's Classical Undersong: Education, Rhetoric and Poetic Truth* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 2000)
Cornell DS	William Wordsworth, *Descriptive Sketches*, ed. Eric Birdsall (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984)
Cornell EW	William Wordsworth, *An Evening Walk*, ed. J. Averill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984)
Cornell LB	William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, ed. J. Butler and K. Green (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992)
Cornell SP	William Wordsworth, *The Salisbury Plain Poems*, ed. S. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975)
Crum	N. C. Crum, 'The Life of Basil Montagu'(unpublished B.Litt. thesis, Oxford, 1950)
Culture of Dissent	Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)

Danby	John F. Danby, *The Simple Wordsworth: Studies in the Poems 1797 - 1807* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960
de Selincourt	Earnest de Selincourt, *Dorothy Wordsworth: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933)
Don Lock	Don Lock, *A Fantasy of Reason: The Life and Thought of William Godwin* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980)
Émile	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979)
The Enquirer	William Godwin, *The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature*, ed. Jeffrey Stern (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994)
Essay	Joseph Priestley, *Miscellaneous Observations Relating to Education. More especially, as it reflects the Conduct of the Mind. To which is added, An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life*, ed. Jeffrey Stern (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995)
Erdman	David V. Erdman, 'Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Wedgwood Fund', *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 60 (1956), 425-443, 487-507
Evans & Pinney	Bergen Evans and Hester Pinney, 'Racedown and the Wordsworths', *Review of English Studies*, 8 (1932), 1-18

An Evening Walk versions:

1793 *Evening Walk*: the poem published in January 1793

1794 *Evening Walk*: the poem revised in 1794

EY	*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt, 2nd ed., *The Early Years, 1787 - 1805*, rev. C. L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967)
Four Texts	William Wordsworth, *The Prelude: Four Texts (1798, 1799, 1805, 1850)*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995)

Glen	Heather Glen, *Vision and Disenchantment: Blake's Songs and Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)
Gunning	Henry Gunning, *Reminiscences of the University, Town and County of Cambridge, from the Year 1780*, 2 vols (London, 1854)
Hazlitt	William Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: Dent, 1930 - 4)
Heffernan	James A. W. Heffernan, 'Wordsworth's Levelling Muse in 1798', in *1798: The Year of the Lyrical Ballads*, ed. by Richard Cronin (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 231-253
Jacobus	Mary Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth's* Lyrical Ballads, *1798* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976)
'Joseph Johnson'	Leslie F. Chard II., 'Joseph Johnson: Father of the Book Trade', *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 79(1975-6), 51-82
LB (Brett and Jones)	William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. R. L. Brett and A. R. Jones (London and New York: Methuen, 1963)
Letters	Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, ed. Richard Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987)
Litchfield	R. B. Litchfield, *Tom Wedgwood: The First Photographer* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1903)
Marshall	Peter H. Marshall, *William Godwin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984)
Mayo	Robert Mayo, 'The Contemporaneity of the *Lyrical Ballads*', *PMLA* 69(1954), 486-522
Meisenhelder	Susan Edwards Meisenhelder, *Wordsworth's Informed Reader: Structures of Experience in His Poetry* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1988)

Montagu	Basil Montagu's Autobiographical Notebook (Dove Cottage Library, MS A/Montagu, B/26)
Moorman	Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography; The Early Years: 1770-1803* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957)
O'Neill	Michael O'Neill, '*Lyrical Ballads* and the Pre-established Codes of Decision', in *1800: The New Lyrical Ballads*, eds. by Nicola Trott and Seamus Perry (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 123-140
Pares	Richard Pares, *A West-India Fortune* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1950)
Parrish	Stephen Maxfield Parrish, 'Dramatic Technique in the *Lyrical Ballads*', *PMLA*, LXXIV (1959), 85-97
The Peripatetic	John Thelwall, *The Peripatetic: Sketches of the Heart, of Nature and Society; in a Series of Politico-Sentimental Journals, in Verse and Prose, of the Eccentric Excursions of Sylvanus Theophrastus* (3 vols; London, 1793), ed. Donald H. Reiman, 2 vols (New York: Garland, 1978)
Pfau	Thomas Pfau, *Wordsworth's Profession: Form, Class & the Logics of Early Romantic Cultural Production* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997)
Political Justice	William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, 2 vols (London, 1793)

The 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*:

The 1800 'Preface': the 'Preface' to the two-volume edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (published January 1800)

The 1802 'Preface': the part added to the 'Preface' in June 1802

The Prelude versions:

'Was It For This': the existing earliest *Prelude* draft of October 1798

The Two-Part *Prelude*: the two-part version of *The Prelude* (completed November 1799)

The 1805 *Prelude*: the Thirteen-book version of *The Prelude* (completed May 1805)

The 1850 *Prelude*: the Fourteen-book version of *The Prelude* (published July 1850)

Pr. W.	*The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and J. W. Smyser 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)
PW	*The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt and H. Darbishire, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940-9)
Radical Years	Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988)
Reed	Mark L. Reed, *Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Early Years, 1770-1799* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1967)
Reflections	Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event*, ed. C. C. O'Brien (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968)
Richardson	Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
St Clair	William St Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys: The biography of a family* (London: Faber, 1989)
Stone	Lawrence Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900', *Past and Present*, 42(1969), 69-139
Thomas	Gordon Kent Thomas, *Wordsworth and the Motions of the Mind* (New York: P. Lang, 1989)
T.W. Thompson	T. W. Thompson, *Wordsworth's Hawkshead*, ed. Robert Woof (London: Oxford University Press, 1970)
The Wedgwood Circle	Barbara and Hensleigh Wedgwood, *The Wedgwood Circle 1730 – 1897: Four Generations of a Family and Their Friends* (London: Studio Vista, 1980)
Wu	Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770 - 1799* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Introduction

This thesis is a study of William Wordsworth's life of 1791 - 1802, the years from his introduction to the British reform movement to the publication of the second two-volume edition of *Lyrical Ballads.* In *The Spirit of the Age: or, Contemporary Portraits* (1825) William Hazlitt says, 'Mr. Wordsworth's genius is a pure emanation of the Spirit of the Age'.[1] Hazlitt states that the 'political changes of the day' like the French Revolution and the British reform movement were 'the model on which [Wordsworth] formed and conducted his poetical experiments' in three editions of *Lyrical Ballads* (published 1798, 1801, and 1802).[2] This thesis aims to develop Hazlitt's discussion of Wordsworth's 'poetical experiments' of 1798 – 1802 as 'one of the innovations of the time' which 'partakes of, and is carried along with, the revolutionary movement' of the 1790s.[3]

As another marked 'emancipation of the Spirit of the Age' Hazlitt points to William Godwin. In the mid and late 1790s Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) was such a powerful 'blow' to 'the philosophical mind of the country' as to draw its attention to the welfare of mankind by means of 'universal benevolence' and '*reason without* passion'.[4] As Hazlitt recollects, Godwin was then 'a sun in the firmament of reputation; no one was more talked of, more looked up to, more sought after, and wherever liberty, truth, justice was the theme, his name was not far off'.[5] In May 1794 Wordsworth was stimulated by the 'imprisonment' of the twelve radical leaders to decide to act as a 'philanthropist', who, having 'recoil[ed] from the bare idea of a revolution', intended to promote 'the progress of human improvement' under the influence of *Political Justice.*[6]

In this thesis I focus on education as central to Wordsworth's political and literary activities of 1791 - 1802, largely because his principal concern of this period was social reform by rational means. I am particularly interested in education in terms of what *The Oxford English Dictionary* describes as the

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[1] William Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt in Twenty-one Volumes,* ed. P. P. Howe (London: Dent, 1930-4), Vol. XI, p. 86 (hereafter referred to as 'Hazlitt').
[2] Hazlitt, XI, p. 87.
[3] Hazlitt, XI, p. 87.
[4] Hazlitt, XI, pp. 16, 19-20.
[5] Hazlitt, XI, p. 16.
[6] William and Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth,* ed. E. de Selincourt, 2nd ed., *The Early Years, 1787 - 1805,* rev. C. L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 123-4 (hereafter referred to as *EY*). Wordsworth's letter to William Mathews of 8 June 1794 concerning the plan for a Godwinian periodical, entitled *The Philanthropist.*

'[c]ulture or development of powers, formation of character, as contrasted with the imparting of mere knowledge or skill'.[7] Wordsworth's sense of 'the progress of human improvement' emphasizes the extent to which education is not just to do with 'knowledge' or 'skill' but has ethical, social, and political dimensions. This thesis aims to enlarge upon Hazlitt's discussion of Wordsworth's 'poetical experiments' by examining how, through his involvement in the 'political changes of the day' like the French Revolution and the British reform movement, Wordsworth elaborated a 'model' of the 'development' of intellectual, moral, and philosophical 'powers'. It was on this model, according to Hazlitt, that Wordsworth later 'formed and conducted his poetical experiments' on 'the progress of human improvement' through the enlightenment of the reader of *Lyrical Ballads*.[8]

My discussion proceeds in a chronological sequence, and explores the connection between the development of Wordsworth's principles of education and his growth as a man and poet. A number of critics and biographers have discussed Wordsworth's ideas and practice of education, but in this thesis I present a detailed survey of how Wordsworth constructed a new system of poetic education from his first-hand experience of the political changes of the 1790s.[9] I will not discuss his most well-known voice of education in his life time, *The Excursion* (1814), which is one of what Hazlitt calls the poet's 'later philosophical productions'.[10] *The Excursion* deals chiefly with a different sort of education, namely a system of national education of the lower-class children, or what *The Oxford English Dictionary* describes as '[t]he systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the

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[7] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 'education', 4.

[8] See Hazlitt, XI, p. 87.

[9] For instance, James K. Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature: A Study of Poetry and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Richard W. Clancey, *Wordsworth's Classical Undersong: Education, Rhetoric and Poetic Truth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000); Heather Glen, *Vision and Disenchantment: Blake's Songs and Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Robert Mayo, 'The Contemporaneity of the *Lyrical Ballads*', *PMLA* 69 (1954), 486-522; Susan Edwards Misenhelder, *Wordsworth's Informed Reader: Structures of Experience in His Poetry* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1988); Michael O'Neill, '*Lyrical Ballads* and the Pre-established Codes of Decision', in *1800: The New Lyrical Ballads*, eds Nicola Trott and Seamus Perry (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 123-40; Thomas Pfau, *Wordsworth's Profession: Form, Class & the Logics of Early Romantic Cultural Production* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Gordon Kent Thomas, *Wordsworth and the Motions of the Mind* (New York: P. Lang, 1989); and Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). My detailed divergences from and development of the works of these critics is noted at relevant points throughout the thesis.

[10] Hazlitt, XI, pp. 87, 90.

young in preparation for the work of life'.[11] In this thesis I am as concerned to discover continuities as to remark on the obvious changes in Wordsworth's ideas and practice of education in 1791 – 1802.

As a prelude to my discussion of Wordsworth's careers of 1791 -1802, I call attention to his first encounter with what Hazlitt calls 'the political changes of the day'. On 13 July 1790, the eve of the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, Wordsworth and his Cambridge friend Robert Jones arrived in Calais and began a tour through France and the Alps. Two months later, on 6 September, Wordsworth wrote to his sister Dorothy and said that he was glad to visit France 'at the time when the whole nation was mad with joy, in consequence of the revolution'.[12] As the most impressive 'consequence of the revolution' he suggested the civilization of all social classes:

> We not only found the French a much less imposing people, but that politeness diffused thro the lowest ranks had an air so engaging, that you could scarce attribute it to any other cause than real benevolence. During the time which was near a month which we were in France, we had not once to complain of the smallest deficiency in civility in any person, much less of any positive rudeness. (*EY*, 36)

To Wordsworth 'politeness', 'benevolence', and 'civility' in the individual appear to have been the basis for the welfare of the whole public in revolutionary France.

Soon after Wordsworth's return to Cambridge, in November 1790, Edmund Burke published *Reflections on the Revolution in France, and the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to That Event*. Burke insisted that the revolution in France had demolished 'all the good things' in 'manners' and 'civilization', which had been inherited for ages only by 'its natural protectors and guardians', namely 'the nobility and the clergy'.[13] He warned the British ruling class that the French National Assembly would lead the people to 'savage and brutal' humanity.[14] Within several months after the publication of *Reflections* numerous pamphlets had appeared as

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[11] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 'education', 3.
[12] *EY*, 36. Wordsworth to Dorothy, 6 and 16 September 1790.
[13] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event*, ed. C. C. O'Brien (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 173 (hereafter referred to as *Reflections*).
[14] Burke, *Reflections*, p. 174.

replies to Burke, including the first part of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (22 February 1791).[15] Whereas Burke excluded 'a swinish multitude'[16] of those of no inherited rank or wealth from his audience, Paine intended to draw the attention of the lower-middle and lower classes to the reform of social and economic inequalities by presenting his political ideals with orderly arrangement and characteristic directness of expression. Reproaching Burke for his insistence on the natural rights of the ruling class, Paine aimed to educate each reader so that he could improve his social organization and culture as well as his way of life. In January 1791 Wordsworth moved from Cambridge to London, and went into circles likely to be receptive to Paine's ideals. His aim was to consider whether and how he could contribute to the British reform movement. His introduction to the reformists in London was the beginning of his involvement with the ideals of the welfare of mankind through the enlightenment of the individual. In this sense I take January 1791 as the starting point for my discussion of Wordsworth's engagement with education.

This thesis, consisting of five chapters, proceeds in a chronological manner, largely because Wordsworth's principles of education are a product of his growth as a man and poet. Chapter One explores the basis of Wordsworth's views of education from his upbringing up until his graduation from Cambridge. Wordsworth's childhood is discussed by focusing on how and to what extent the progress of his mind and heart was influenced by his mother. His schooling at Cockermouth, Penrith, and Hawkshead is examined in comparison with the educational systems practised at public institutions. Wordsworth's less well-known composition on education in his Hawkshead period is discussed as his early voice of educational ideals. Suggesting the singularity of Wordsworth's upbringing, I will show the basis for his belief that the reform of the existing educational systems was necessary for a thoroughgoing reform of society. I also focus on Dorothy Wordsworth's upbringing, her teaching at Sunday school, and her care of her uncle's children, which, I believe, contributed much to the development of Wordsworth's educational ideals as well as to that of his poetic principles.

The following four chapters cover the four stages of Wordsworth's views of education in January 1791 - June 1802, and highlight the continuity

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[15] See F. P. Lock, *Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985), p. 144. According to Lock, about thirty pamphlets had been published as 'replies' to Burke within six months after the publication of *Reflections*.
[16] Burke, *Reflections*, p. 173.

of his aim and the changes in his method: from his first contact with the British reform movement in January 1791 until the conclusion of his close connection with Godwin in April 1795 Wordsworth was a 'pupil' who was anxious to learn the ideals of 'the progress of human improvement'(*EY*, 123) from his predecessors; from the beginning of his instruction of Basil Montagu in spring 1795 until the conclusion of his Racedown period in July 1797 he was a 'preceptor' who sought his own method of 'the progress of human improvement'; from the beginning of his Alfoxden period in July 1797 until the publication of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* in September 1798 he was a 'poet-preceptor' who experimented in 'the progress of human improvement' through the enlightenment of the individual; and since his departure from the West Country in late summer 1798 he had gradually transformed into a 'prophet' who intended to instruct mankind.

Chapter Two focuses on the period from January 1791 to April 1795, in which Wordsworth was a 'pupil' who was anxious to learn the ideals of 'the progress of human improvement' from the dissenting reformists and the rational thinkers in London and Michel Beaupuy in revolutionary France. In spring 1793 he made the first attempt to present his political opinions to the public in *A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*. Calling himself an 'advocate of republicanism', Wordsworth aimed to help his predecessors reform the existing systems of education, which had promoted 'the baleful influence of aristocracy and nobility upon human happiness and virtue' by instructing the people to be 'ready to lay themselves under the feet of *the great*'.[17] The *Letter* was not presented to the public, but I will point out that in composing the *Letter*, Wordsworth may have become convinced that the crucial precedent for the welfare of society in Britain was the widespread education of those whom Burke had spurned as a 'swinish multitude'.

In May 1794 Wordsworth embarked on a scheme for a periodical, entitled *The Philanthropist*, which I will discuss as his voice as an 'enlightened friend of mankind', who intended to 'put into each man's hand a lantern to guide him and not have him to set out upon his journey depending for illumination on abortive flashes of lightning, or the coruscations of transitory meteors'.[18] The 'ardent wish to promote the welfare of mankind'(*EY*, 127) by literary means preoccupied Wordsworth even after the abandonment of the *Philanthropist* scheme. Nicholas Roe,

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[17] William Wordsworth, *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and J. W. Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), I, 38, 36 (hereafter referred to as *Pr. W.*).
[18] *EY*, 125. Wordsworth to William Mathews, 8 June 1794.

Kenneth R. Johnston, and others have suggested that Wordsworth's political views of 1793 - 1795 were under the influence of Godwin's *Political Justice*,[19] though he was, I think, anxious to be neither a Godwinian 'Philanthropist' nor a leader of a Godwinian rational society. By examining his poems of 1794, the revised version of *An Evening Walk* and *A Night on Salisbury Plain*, I will suggest that Wordsworth was not in total agreement with Godwin's rational principles at their first meeting of 27 February 1795. Having lived in Godwin's neighbourhood in March and April 1795, Wordsworth moved into Lincoln's Inn, where he began to live with Basil Montagu and his infant son. I will consider the reason why Wordsworth concluded his regular visits to Godwin in April 1795 by focusing on his sympathy for the Montagus, which, I believe, may have convinced him of his rightness in disapproving of Godwin's rationalism.

Chapter Three examines the growth of the 'preceptor' Wordsworth by dealing with his preliminary experiments in education from his encounter with Basil Montagu in spring 1795 until the conclusion of his Racedown period in July 1797. The influence of Wordsworth's instruction on Montagu is examined by N. C. Crum in her thesis, entitled 'The Life of Basil Montagu'. I will develop Crum's argument by suggesting that Wordsworth's instruction of Montagu may have enabled him to go beyond Godwin's abstract principles of benevolence to his own ideals of the happiness of individuals as a basis for the welfare of society. I also intend to highlight the influence of Montagu on Wordsworth's future political and literary careers.

In late August 1795 Wordsworth left Montagu's chambers for Bristol, where he spent five weeks with John Pretor Pinney, the merchant of West India fortune and proprietor of Racedown Lodge. I will explore Wordsworth's less well-known period from his first meeting with Pinney until his moving into Racedown Lodge on 26 September by referring to the Pinneys' letters and account books (which belong to the University of Bristol Archives). My principal aim is to suggest that Wordsworth may have been influenced by Pinney's keen interest in the instruction of his black servants and slaves as well as his enthusiasm for the education of his children. The significance of Wordsworth's five-week stay with Pinney is also considered

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[19] Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: the Radical Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 11, 184-7 (hereafter referred to as *Radical Years*). Kenneth R. Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet·Lover·Rebel·Spy* (New York: Norton, 1998), p. 436 (hereafter referred to as *Hidden Wordsworth*).

in my discussion of Wordsworth's and Dorothy's fostering of Montagu's infant son at Racedown and Alfoxden in September 1795 - June 1798.

In his Racedown period from September 1795 to July 1797 Wordsworth experimented in encouraging 'the progress of human improvement' by means of poetry. To trace the development of Wordsworth's ideals of poetic education, I will examine *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, 'The Baker's Cart', 'Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree', and 'Old Man Travelling'. In doing so, I will consider the possible connection between Godwin's *The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature* (published February 1797) and Wordsworth's literary experiments in the enlightenment of the individual. Chapter Three concludes by suggesting that by the beginning of his collaboration with Coleridge in July 1797 Wordsworth had already been convinced of his aim at 'the progress of human improvement' through the enlightenment of the individual reader, but was not yet sure of his method.

Chapter Four is concerned with the activities of the 'poet-preceptor' Wordsworth in July 1797 - September 1798. In this period Coleridge enabled and encouraged Wordsworth to elaborate his method of poetic education. I will focus on the importance of the two visitors to Alfoxden in the development of Wordsworth's educational principles: John Thelwall, a one-time leading radical reformist and the author of the 'Politico-Sentimental Journals', entitled *The Peripatetic: Sketches of the Heart, of Nature and Society*, and Tom Wedgwood, an ardent advocate of *Political Justice*, who discussed with Wordsworth a rational educational scheme for 'the progress of human improvement'.

In March 1798 Wordsworth announced in his letters a scheme for a poem, entitled *The Recluse or views of Nature, Man, and Society*, which he hoped to 'make of considerable utility'(*EY*, 214). The projected 'utility' of *The Recluse* seems to be demonstrated to the public in the 'Advertisement' to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, which Wordsworth may have already had in mind as early as March 1798, when he began composing most of his contributions to the volume concerning 'human passions, human character, and human incidents'.[20] Such subjects were not exclusive to *Lyrical Ballads* but common to Thelwall's *Peripatetic* and most of the contemporary magazines and periodicals. As the novelty of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* I will focus on

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[20] William Wordsworth, the 'Advertisement' to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*; quoted from William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, ed. J. Butler and K. Green (Cornell Wordsworth Series, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 738 (hereafter cited from this edition as 'The "Advertisement"').

Wordsworth's method of encouraging the reader to go beyond the 'pre-established codes of decision'[21] to his own aesthetic and ethical code. The educational effects of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* on the reader have been discussed by a number of critics such as Stephen Maxfield Parrish, Mary Jacobus, and Heather Glen.[22] I will point out that Wordsworth may have drawn upon Thelwall's *Peripatetic* and Godwin's *Enquirer* for his original method of encouraging the reader's creative engagement with interpretation. Examining Wordsworth's contributions to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, I will suggest how each poem is calculated to help the reader achieve his potential. Chapter Four aims to define the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* as the 'poet-preceptor' Wordsworth's experiments in 'the progress of human improvement' through the enlightenment of the individual reader.

When *Lyrical Ballads* was published in mid September 1798, Wordsworth, Dorothy, and Coleridge were on their way to Germany. My fifth and final chapter deals with the period from Wordsworth's settlement at Goslar in October 1798 to the publication of the second two-volume edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in June 1802. By the conclusion of his stay in Germany in April 1799 Wordsworth had completed an autobiographical poem of some four hundred and thirty lines, which is now known as the first part of the Two-Part *Prelude*. His first attempt at preparing himself for *The Recluse* is discussed as his first recognition of the singularity of his upbringing. Since his return to England, Wordsworth had become aware of the gap between his talents and other people's through the reading of the reviews of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, the composition of the subsequent part of *The Prelude*, and his observations on the lower class, which he expressed in the 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*.

The changes in Wordsworth's method of poetic education are discussed by referring to the 'Preface' to the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* and Wordsworth's poems in the second volume of it. As the most marked change, I will focus on his turn towards an authoritarian, didactic mode of teaching, which is expressed not only in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* but also in Wordsworth's letters. In the expanded 'Preface' to the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth demonstrates himself as a poet 'speaking to

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[21] The 'Advertisement', 739.

[22] Stephen Maxfield Parrish, *The Art of the "Lyrical Ballads"*(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973). Mary Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads, 1798* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). Heather Glen, *Vision and Disenchantment: Blake's Songs and Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

men', 'singing a song in which all human beings join with him', and having in his qualities 'nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree'.[23] However, in the concluding paragraph in the 1802 'Preface' Wordsworth insists on his difference 'in kind' from 'other men' by saying that as a poet he must 'descend' from the 'height' in order to 'excite rational sympathy' by demonstrating 'the spirit of the passions of men'.[24] While expecting the publication of the new edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in June 1802, Wordsworth expressed his duty as a 'poet-prophet' and tried out an authoritarian mode of instruction in his letters to John Wilson and Sarah Hutchinson. Referring to his letters of June 1802, I hope to show how far Wordsworth had been distancing himself from his readers since the publication of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*.

My thesis takes June 1802 as its terminal date, for Wordsworth seems to have presented the 1802 *Lyrical Ballads* as his last attempt at the civilization of the reader. My conclusion briefly discusses Wordsworth's views on education after June 1802. In 1805 he gave the fullest expression to his duty as a 'Prophet of nature' in the Thirteen-Book *Prelude*, which was not presented to the public in his lifetime. However, in the published part of *The Recluse*, entitled *The Excursion* (1814), Wordsworth seems to have demonstrated himself as a leader of a virtuous society by insisting on the establishment of a system of national education as a solution to the debased condition of the lower-class children. Examining the review of Wordsworth's publications after *The Excursion* by one of his ideal pupils, John Wilson, I will consider how far aloof Wordsworth was located by readers in his later years. In *The Spirit of the Age* another pupil of Wordsworth's poetic education, William Hazlitt, praises him as 'a pure emanation of the Spirit of the Age' and 'one of the innovations of the time' which 'partakes of, and is carried along with, the revolutionary movement of our age', though regarding his 'later philosophical productions' as 'a departure from, a dereliction of his first principles'.[25] My thesis goes no further than June 1802, when Wordsworth was a 'poet' aiming to 'travel before men occasionally as well as at their sides'(*EY*, 355), but I hope to highlight an early stage of 'a departure from, a dereliction of his first principles' of education.

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[23] William Wordsworth, the part added to the 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* in 1802; quoted from William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, ed. J. Butler and K. Green, 752-3 (hereafter cited from this edition as 'The 1802 'Preface'').

[24] The 1802 'Preface', 754.

[25] Hazlitt, XI, pp. 86-7, 90.

1. The Progress of the Wordsworths' Minds and Hearts

1. 1. Childhood at Cockermouth and Penrith

On 7 April 1770 William Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth in the Lake District as the second son of John Wordsworth, the political business agent for Sir James, the fifth baronet Lowther, and Ann Wordsworth, the daughter of William Cookson, linen-draper and church warden at Penrith. Dorothy was born on 25 December 1771 as the third child and only daughter of John and Ann Wordsworth. Since 1765 John Wordsworth had devoted himself to the political surveillance of the area in Lowther's interests. Both at Millom and at Cockermouth his business was to keep the freeholders faithful in their political allegiance, and to lead them to vote properly at election time. Some information about John Wordsworth's business was mentioned by the poet's friend Thomas De Quincey. Since he moved into the Lake District, De Quincey had frequently heard local people referring to the fifth baronet Lowther as "the bad Lord Lonsdale". 'In what was he bad?', De Quincey said, and suggested an answer:

> Chiefly, I believe, in this - that, being a man of great local power, founded on his rank, on his official station of Lord Lieutenant over two countries, and on a very large estate, he used his power in a most oppressive way.[1]

It was, according to De Quincey, Lowther's 'oppressive' attitude that forced some local people to recollect him as 'mad', and made others regard him as 'inordinately capricious'. To De Quincey, Lowther's 'madness' and 'eccentricity' seem to have been 'nothing more than the intemperance of a haughty and a headstrong will, encouraged by the consciousness of power'.[2] Either 'mad' or 'capricious', or both, Lowther was assuredly disreputable both as a man and as a politician. Kenneth R. Johnston points out that political business agents were more or less unpopular, since 'they tended to treat people as their master treated them'.[3] There is no record or evidence to suggest that Wordsworth's father had treated people in such an 'oppressive'

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[1] Thomas De Quincey, 'Lake Reminiscences, from 1807 to 1830. Nos. I-III. - William Wordsworth. By the English Opium-Eater', in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 6, II (February, 1839); quoted from *Lives of the Great Romantics by Their Contemporaries*, Volume 3, Wordsworth, ed. Peter Swaab (London: Pickering, 1996), p. 108 (hereafter referred to as *Lives of the Great Romantics*).

[2] *Lives of the Great Romantics*, vol. 3, p. 108.

[3] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, pp. 22-3 .

way as Lowther had done. However, I agree with Mary Moorman, who says

> For eighteen years, from 1765 until his death in 1783, John Wordsworth served his strange master with zeal and fidelity. His devotion made him reserved with his neighbours: he took little part in the life and affairs of Cockermouth; he was regarded as the representative of a man more feared than loved.[4]

John Wordsworth's connection with the 'feared' Lord Lonsdale most certainly obliged his family to receive more hostility than hospitality from their neighbours at Cockermouth.

Johnston suggests that even though not old enough to fully understand political issues, the Wordsworth children, 'especially sensitive ones like William and Dorothy', presumably picked up 'the tension in the atmosphere' at and around the Cockermouth house, which was Lowther's important political headquarters.[5] In fact, Dorothy said in a letter of August 1787, 'it is indeed mortifying to my Brothers and me to find that amongst all those who visited at my father's house he had not one real friend'.[6] On 7 August 1805 while reading Wordsworth's recently completed thirteen-book version of *The Prelude*,[7] Dorothy recollected her home at Cockermouth:

> It is at the outskirts of the Town, the garden bordering on the River Derwent or rather a *Terrace* which overlooks at the River, a spot which I remember as vividly as if I had been there but the other day, though I have never seen it in its neatness, as my Father and Mother used to keep it, since I was just six years old, a few months before my Mother's death. (*EY*, 616)

What Dorothy remembered 'vividly' was only the 'garden bordering on the River Derwent'. Moorman says that the Wordsworth children had been 'entirely free and happy' at Cockermouth,[8] but Dorothy's recollection

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[4] Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography*, vol. I. *The Early Years*, 1770-1803 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 7 (hereafter referred to as 'Moorman').
[5] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 32.
[6] *EY*, 7. Dorothy to Jane Pollard, 6 and 7 August 1787.
[7] See Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, pp. 817-8. Johnston suggests that Dorothy spent three months through the winter of 1805-6 preparing a clean copy of *The Prelude* (completed May 1805).
[8] Moorman, p. 70.

suggests that like John Wordsworth, his family may have had few or no 'real friend' at Cockermouth.

Dorothy and her brothers may have remembered more vividly their grandparents' house at Penrith, where they spent nearly half of a year.[9] Moorman suggests that the passage concerning the 'infant babe' and his mother in *The Prelude* presumably emerged from Wordsworth's memories of his Penrith period:[10]

> Blest the infant babe
> (For with my best conjectures I would trace
> The progress of our being), blest the babe
> Nursed in his mother's arms, the babe who sleeps
> Upon his mother's breast, who when his soul
> Claims manifest kindred with an earthly soul,
> Does gather passion from his mother's eye!
> (The 1805 *Prelude*, II, 237 - 243)

The 'babe' in this passage is, as is pointed out by Jonathan Wordsworth and others, Coleridge's first son, Hartley.[11] Nevertheless, Moorman insists that without a 'profound conviction of the benevolence of his own mother's care', Wordsworth could not have written 'the relation of the infant to its mother' as 'the archetype from which springs the happiness of the child's intercourse with the universe'.[12] I agree with Moorman that seeing Hartley sleeping on his mother's breast, Wordsworth most likely recollected his mother nursing his younger brothers in her arms.

Another possible reference to Ann Wordsworth in *The Prelude*, as Moorman points out, is the passage concerning the 'parent hen' in Book V.[13] Like the mother and her infant babe in Book II of the 1805 *Prelude*, the parent hen and her children are closely connected to each other:

> Behold the parent hen amid her brood -
> Through fledged and feathered, and well pleased to part
> And straggle from her presence, still a brood,

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[9] See Mark L. Reed, *Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Early Years* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 41 (hereafter referred to as 'Reed'). Referring to Gordon G. Wordsworth's "Notes on the Family Account", Reed suggests that Ann and her children may well have spent much time in 1773-7 with the Cooksons at Penrith.

[10] Moorman, p. 3.

[11] See William Wordsworth, *The Prelude: The Four Texts (1798, 1799, 1805, 1850)*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), p. 564n (hereafter referred to as *Four Texts*).

[12] Moorman, p. 3.

[13] Moorman, p. 2.

And she herself from the maternal bond
Still undischarged. Yet does she little more
Than move with them in tenderness and love,
A centre of the circle which they make;
And now and then - alike from need of theirs
And call of her own natural appetites -
She scratches, ransacks up the earth for food,
Which they partake at pleasure.
(The 1805 *Prelude*, V, 246 - 256)

Like the 'parent hen', Ann may have 'undischarged' herself from a strong 'maternal bond' with each of her five children both at Cockermouth and at Penrith. She remained in the 'centre of the circle' of the Wordsworth family providing each child with 'tenderness and love'.

Referring to this 'parent hen' passage, Moorman says that Ann provided her children with 'the priceless gift of a peaceable and tranquil love', which 'sustained and cherished' them 'without ever interfering with their pleasures or dominating them with schemes and activities of her own'.[14] In the subsequent passage in Book V Wordsworth says, 'My honoured mother . . . was the heart /And hinge of all our learnings and our loves'(V, 257-8). What he learned from his mother was, as is described in the 'infant babe' passage, a 'virtue which irradiat[ed] and exalt[ed] /All objects through all intercourse of sense'(II, 259-60). Wordsworth's recollection of his mother was most likely stimulated by Dorothy, who said in a letter to Lady Beaumont of March 1805, 'From her I know that I received much good that I can trace back to her', in particular, 'a deep sympathy with those who know what fraternal affection is'. Wordsworth most certainly agreed with Dorothy, who was so grateful for her mother's moral virtue as to state, 'It has been the building up of my being, and the light of my path'.[15]

The 'parent hen' passage in Book V of the 1805 *Prelude* is also drawn upon by Ernest de Selincourt to describe Ann as a 'fine example of the old type of motherhood', namely a 'woman of high character, and rich in common sense', though 'not intellectual'. He asserts that 'infected by none of the newfangled theories of education that had followed in the wake of Rousseau', Ann let the children disport themselves at will in Nature.[16] *The Prelude* also suggests that Ann introduced Wordsworth not only to Nature

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[14] Moorman, p. 2.

[15] *EY*, 568. Dorothy to Lady Beaumont, 18 and 19 March 1805.

[16] Earnest de Selincourt, *Dorothy Wordsworth: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 4 (hereafter referred to as 'de Selincourt'). de Selincourt refers to the 1805 *Prelude*, V. 256-90.

but also to literature by helping him 'reap /One precious gain' such as the stories of 'Fortunatus', 'Jack the Giant-Killer' and 'Robin Hood'.[17] In this respect, Ann disagreed with Rousseau, who strictly prohibited Émile from reading any books except *Robinson Crusoe* to restrain the emergence of his imagination.[18]

The close 'maternal bond'(V, 249) is focused on by Johnston, who suggests that the Wordsworth children may have felt deeper affection for their mother while staying at Penrith, where they were treated by their grandparents and uncle Christopher Crackanthorpe Cookson with little sympathy.[19] Johnston says, 'there were good reasons of class and politics to motivate the Cooksons' disapproval of the Wordsworth children', among which the most marked source of 'irritation to the Cooksons' was their father's close connection with Lowther.[20] Another source of the Cooksons' irritation, as Moorman points out, is that the 'high-spirited' Wordsworth children, in particular 'stiff, moody, and violent' William, were pretty often in collision with the authority of their Cookson grandparents and relatives.[21] As Johnston says, every indication that has come down to us about their Penrith period is of 'disapproval and nagging correction of the Wordsworth children's behavior'.[22] Consequently, as is pointed out by both Moorman and Johnston,[23] punishment and the lack of sympathy only led the Wordsworth children to act in 'defiance' of their grandparents and uncle. Like the 'parent hen' in *The Prelude*, Ann may have 'undischarged' herself from 'the maternal bond' by which she attempted to protect her children against any 'blame'.[24]

At Penrith initial schooling began for Wordsworth in May 1775, when he went to a dame school run by Mrs. Ann Birkett for children of the middle classes. In this period it was generally a matter of parental choice as to whether a child should receive basic instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic at home or at informal establishments. A dame school was usually trusted by parents, since the dame, often an elderly widow, having

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[17] See The 1805 *Prelude*, V, 364-9.

[18] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, or On Education*, intro. and trans. Allan Bloom (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), pp. 184-5 (hereafter referred to as *Émile*). Rousseau regarded *Robinson Crusoe* as a 'marvellous book' which could serve a test of the condition of children's judgement during their progress.

[19] See Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 33.

[20] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 32.

[21] Moorman, p. 13.

[22] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 33.

[23] Moorman, p. 13, and Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 33.

[24] The 1805 *Prelude*, V, 246, 249-50, 262.

taught more than one generation of local children, was known to most of the members of the community. In fact, a considerable number of dames provided children with more physical violence than instruction, but most were more or less capable of teaching children the rudiments of reading and arithmetic, the main stories of the Bible, the chief tenets of Christianity, basic facts of English history and world geography. Some experienced dames were able to prepare their lessons with regard to each individual need.

Mrs. Birkett was assuredly well-reputed for having educated children as useful members of the community by following the ways 'of an older and vanishing England' for many years.[25] She made a considerable contribution to the growth of Wordsworth's heart by enabling him to find some friends including his future wife Mary Hutchinson.[26] Her contribution to Wordsworth's intellectual development was, on the other hand, of less significance, since Mary Wordsworth (née Hutchinson) later recollected Mrs. Birkett as 'no bad Teacher' but 'indifferent to <u>method</u>':

> The Spectators she [the Hutchinsons' aunt] used to lend us to take to School as being approved by our Dame, as a '<u>reading</u>' book! What would our modern Teachers say, to the Spectator being used by Children under 8 years of age?[27]

Mrs. Birkett was 'indifferent' as to what kind of book would be suited for her pupils' intellectual development.

There is no way of knowing whether Mrs. Birkett was ignorant of Rousseau's method of teaching Émile or indifferent to it. However, it is certain that Mrs. Birkett, like Ann Wordsworth, did not agree with Rousseau, who provided Émile with no 'reading' books except *Robinson Crusoe*. Even though 'indifferent to <u>method</u>', she was so open-minded as to make any books available for her pupils. Mrs. Birkett was rarely referred to by Wordsworth in his letters and works, though it seems likely that his

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[25] Moorman, pp. 15-6, suggests that Mrs. Birkett followed the ways 'of an older and vanishing England'. For instance, she led her pupils to keep 'the country festivals . . . with all due rites'.

[26] See Reed, p. 42n. Henry Inman, who painted Wordsworth's portrait in 1844, recollected in a letter to Henry Reed of 23 June 1845, '[The poet and his wife] had known each other from the early period of infancy, having gone to the same school at three years of age'.

[27] Mary Wordsworth's Memoranda of the Hutchinson and Monkhouse Families (1851), Dove Cottage MS 167 36v; her underlining; quoted from Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770 - 1799* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 131 (hereafter referred to as 'Wu').

image of his mother may have derived in part from his memories of the dame at Penrith, who also encouraged his interest in reading.

At Cockermouth from October 1776 Wordsworth attended the Revd. Mr. Gilbanks's grammar school for at least half a year and possibly for longer. In a small building in the churchyard, Mr. Gilbanks, like Mrs. Birkett, had provided the children at Cockermouth with elementary instruction in reading, arithmetic, and the alphabet. In addition, he most likely encouraged Wordsworth to form close ties not only with other pupils but also with the people in his parish. However, even with Mr. Gilbanks's help, Wordsworth, as the son of the political agent for Lowther, may have found few or no close friends among the pupils or in the community. As a vicar, Mr. Gilbanks was qualified to provide his pupils with initial instruction in Latin, and, in fact, Wordsworth began his study of Latin at this school. How and what Mr. Gilbanks taught was not mentioned by Wordsworth, though, as is suggested by Duncan Wu, some passages of the Book of Common Prayer may have been taught in a catechistic method.[28] Wordsworth's study of Latin at Mr. Gilbanks's school seems to have gone no further than a brief encounter with the Classics.

Since November 1776 Ann Wordsworth had spent more time with her parents at Penrith than at Cockermouth. At Penrith her children attended Mrs. Birkett's school, where they enjoyed both friendship and learning.[29] They rarely saw their father, who was travelling the length and breadth of Cumberland for Lowther, though they felt not 'destitute' but content with their mother, who was the 'heart' and 'hinge' of all their 'learnings' and their 'love'.[30] In Ann's maternal bond the Wordsworth children had been protected against their grandparents' and relatives' blame. It was in early March 1778 that they were deprived of the core of their happiness by the death of their mother. Ann's death forced John Wordsworth to leave the care of his six-and-a-half-year-old daughter Dorothy with Ann's cousin, Elizabeth Threlkeld, in Yorkshire, in order to assume responsibility for his four boys (Richard, aged nine; William, eight; John, five and a half; and Christopher, nearly four). However, his dedication to Lowther allowed him little time to devote to his sons. Consequently, the Wordsworth boys

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[28] Wu, p. 85, suggests that since 1777 Wordsworth may have been learning Latin primers at Gilbanks's School.

[29] Reed, pp. 41-2, suggests that Wordsworth presumably attended Dame Birkett's School during the long stays at Penrith of the year of 1775-6 and of winter 1776-7, and at least some time between that winter and his entering Hawkshead Grammar School in May 1779.

[30] See The 1805 *Prelude*, V, 257-9.

remained under the care of their grandparents at Penrith, and occasionally stayed with their father at Cockermouth. Johnston explains the change following Ann's death by referring to *The Prelude*:

> It is a criticism of adults with too strong plans for the children in their care, either constantly "shaping novelties" and "false unnatural hopes" for their future success of else being full of "feverish dread of error and mishap"(V. 260-80), very unlike Ann Wordsworth's easygoing ways. John Wordsworth had very definite plans for his sons' careers, for what they *should* be, while the Cooksons had very definite feelings of what they should *not* be - namely, dependent on them.[31]

Without Ann's maternal bond, the Wordsworth boys were no longer protected against the Cooksons' blame at Penrith or against their father's 'unnatural hopes' and 'very definite plans' for their future.

John Wordsworth's way of achieving his 'very definite plans' was described by one of the poet's contemporary biographers:

> . . . his father, who was a man of vigorous character, and considerable culture and scholarship, initiated him into the pantheon of poetry, by repeating to him the finest passages of Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser, which the boy subsequently committed to memory.[32]

Wordsworth's mother encouraged the emergence of her children's imagination by introducing them to the imaginary world of tales of travel, romance, and adventure. His father, on the other hand, seems to have followed the prevailing teaching method of this period, namely the endless 'repeating' of the 'finest passages'. It seems readily explicable that, as the biographer suggested, his father's more or less oppressive manner made Wordsworth 'frequently refractory in his conduct, and peevish in his temper'.[33]

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31 Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, pp. 33-4.
32 'January Searle'(George Searle Phillips), *Memoirs of William Wordsworth, Compiled from Authentic Sources; with Numerous Quotations from his Poems, Illustrative of his Life and Character* (London, 1852), quoted from *Lives of the Great Romantics*, vol. 3, p. 187.
33 *Lives of the Great Romantics*, vol. 3, p. 187.

1. 2. Wordsworth at Hawkshead and Cambridge

In May 1779 the nine-year-old Wordsworth entered the grammar school at Hawkshead and lodged with Hugh and Ann Tyson. Johnston describes Wordsworth's Hawkshead period as a kind of 'boisterous release':

> Motherless, practically fatherless, separated from all his siblings except the somber Richard, and with disapproving grandparents and antipathetic uncles, Wordsworth burst into the region, desperately attaching himself to its places and persons.[34]

In particular, as Johnston asserts, released from all the pressure from his father, grandparents, and relatives, Wordsworth achieved the 'explosion into a new psychic space of an emptied-out sensibility'.[35]

The Prelude suggests that Wordsworth's 'emptied-out sensibility' was in part fulfilled by the 'motherly and good' Ann Tyson, who 'led' him to the 'places and persons' at and around Hawkshead.[36] His close attachments to the places are fully expressed in the passages of *The Prelude* concerning his visionary experience. His connections with local people, on the other hand, are mentioned only briefly in Book IV, but are deserving of attention:

> The face of every neighbour whom I met
> Was as a volume to me; some I hailed
> Far off, upon the road or at their work,
> Unceremonious greetings interchanged
> With half the length of a long field between.
> (The 1805 *Prelude*, IV, 58 - 62)

T. W. Thompson insists that Ann Tyson provided Wordsworth with some ideas for the passages concerning the men living in Nature in *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*. Robert Woof enlarges upon Thompson's discussion of the literary aspect of Ann Tyson by asserting that she taught Wordsworth 'to listen' to the tale 'which was anchored to actuality by personal knowledge'.[37] In fact, Wordsworth later recollected that he had picked up some ideas for the 'two Individuals' in *The Excursion* from what he had heard from Ann

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[34] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 42.
[35] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 42.
[36] See The 1805 *Prelude*, IV, 17, 55-7.
[37] T. W. Thompson, *Wordsworth's Hawkshead*, ed. Robert Woof (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 'Introduction', pp. xv-xvi (hereafter referred to as 'T.W. Thompson').

Tyson.[38] His other poems also show us a great deal of the 'volume' of the familiar faces at Hawkshead such as the shepherd, the pedlar, and the beggar.

Wordsworth's friendship with his school-fellow John Fleming was one of the most significant attachments to people in his Hawkshead period. In *The Vale of Esthwaite* (composed 1787-8) Wordsworth devotes some lines to recollecting Fleming, who left Hawkshead for Cambridge in 1785:

> Friend of my soul! for whom I feel
> What words can never half reveal,
> Thou too when musing by the side
> Of thy Winander's darling tide,
> While Hermit Eve in funeral stole
> With holy thoughts inspires the soul,
> Thou too shalt turn thine eager eyes
> To where the Vale of Esthwaite lies
> (That vale where first my eyes surveyed
> Fair Friendship in thy form arrayed)
> And ah! fond wish, methinks I see
> One tender thought shall steal to me.
>
> (*The Vale of Esthwaite*, 466 - 477)

'Friendship and Fleming' seem to Wordsworth, then at the age of fourteen and fifteen, to have been 'the same'(545). Wordsworth recollects in his autobiographical poem that with Fleming he frequently spent some hours early in the morning wandering round Esthwaite's shores:

> My morning walks
> Were early: oft before the hours of school
> I travelled round our little lake, five miles
> Of pleasant wandering. Happy time! - more dear
> For this, that one was by my side, a friend
> Then passionately loved.
>
> (The Two-Part *Prelude*, II, 378 - 383)

While strolling along the lake together, Wordsworth and his 'dear friend' were '[r]epeating favourite verses with one voice, /Or conning more, as happy as the birds'.[39]

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[38] See, William Wordsworth, *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt and H. Darbishire, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940-9), V, 458-9 (hereafter referred to as *PW*).

[39] See The 1805 *Prelude*, V, 581-607.

In this period Eton was the most influential model for the teaching of classical grammar and literature, and not only the other eight major schools (Winchester, Westminster, Harrow, Rugby, Shrewsbury, Charterhouse, St Paul's, and Merchant Taylors) but also most public and grammar schools followed the 'Eton Latin Grammar'.[40] The classical curriculum at Eton was rigid and narrow: the 'Eton Latin Grammar', for example, was written almost entirely in Latin; ancient Greek was learnt after Latin, and the Greek grammars were written in Latin as well.[41] Hawkshead Grammar School, as the most well-known grammar school in the North, was more or less under the influence of the Eton method. However, Wordsworth's and Fleming's love of poetry described in *The Prelude* suggests that they may have been taught to appreciate verses rather than to memorise lines. In fact, Wordsworth later recollected that he owed much of his love of the classics to one of the ushers of Hawkshead School named Shaw, who had taught him 'more of Latin in a fortnight *than [he] had learnt during two preceding years at the school of Cockermouth*'.[42]

Whereas Eton and many of public and grammar schools intensified their preoccupation with the classics, Hawkshead reformed its curriculum by adding instruction in English and mathematics. William Taylor (headmaster from 1781- June 1786) and Thomas Bowman (headmaster after Taylor's death) persuaded pupils to read widely in contemporary English literature such as Thomson, Gray, Collins, Goldsmith, Chatterton, and Beattie by making many books available at Hawkshead School Library and by helping them join book clubs, and lending libraries in Kendal and Penrith.[43] As Wordsworth's poems suggest, he had developed his literary talents by reading and reciting the works by the best contemporary poets as well as the classics. In the holidays he satisfied his literary enthusiasm at

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[40] For the influence of Eton, see Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 66 (hereafter referred to as *Culture of Dissent*). Roe suggests that by 1800 some twenty-five editions of the 'Eton Latin Grammar' had been published. For more about the nine major schools and grammar schools, see James Bowen, 'Education, ideology and the ruling class: Hellenism and English public schools in the nineteenth century', in *Rediscovering Hellenism: The Hellenic Inheritance and the English Imagination*, ed. by Graeme W. Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 161-186; p. 163 (hereafter referred to as 'Bowen').

[41] See Roe, *Culture of Dissent*, p. 66.

[42] *Pr. W.* III, 372.

[43] See T.W. Thompson, pp. 54-5. Thompson calls attention to John Wordsworth's Hawkshead accounts, in which he said that in 1781 he 'Gave Subscription to Books' 5s. each in respect of his sons, Richard and William. This money, as Thompson suggests, enabled the Wordsworth boys to become members of the Boys' Book Club and to borrow books from its small but ever growing library of modern books.

his father's library at Cockermouth, where he found the 'golden store of books'[44] including 'all Fielding's works, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and any part of Swift'[45] as well as the works of Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser.

Hawkshead also added to its curriculum instruction in 'English compositions both in verse and prose'. One of Wordsworth's fellow pupils later recollected

> [Wordsworth's] English compositions both in verse and prose were distinguished at a very early age, as possessing the germs of those high talents which were hereafter to confer such celebrity on their possessor . . . [46]

It was in October 1784 that the fourteen-year-old Wordsworth completed his first verse, 'The Summer Vacation', in response to school assignment by William Taylor.[47] 'The Summer Vacation' made Wordsworth so proud of his 'high talents' that during the following Christmas vacation he began to compose the first verse of his 'own accord' entitled, 'Return to School'. Neither of his earliest poetic works survives, though they most certainly encouraged his literary enthusiasm, for, as Ann Tyson recorded, in January 1785 he, then aged under fifteen, was allowed to study Greek in the most advanced class.[48] In the meantime Wordsworth most likely had some optional tuition in hand-writing and Greek,[49] and presumably developed his literary talents by copying and reciting some masterpieces.

As is mentioned by his Hawkshead contemporary, Wordsworth's 'English compositions' were well received by his schoolmasters and friends. In early summer 1785 the pupils of 'high talents' including Wordsworth were 'called upon' by Taylor to write 'verses upon the completion of the second centenary from the foundation of the school in 1585'.[50] Wordsworth later recollected that although much admired by Taylor, his 'Lines Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead' appears to him to have been nothing but

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[44] See the 1805 *Prelude*, V, 501-5.

[45] *Pr. W.* III, 372.

[46] 'Memoir of William Wordsworth, Esq.', in *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth: Complete in One Volume* (Paris, 1828); quoted from *Lives of the Great Romantics*, vol. 3, p. 44.

[47] Christopher Wordsworth, *Memoir of William Wordsworth*, 2 vols (London, 1851), I, p. 10. See also Reed, p. 15.

[48] See T.W. Thompson, p. 90. Referring to Ann Tyson's lodger, Thompson suggests that Wordsworth reached the highest class in January 1785. Early in that year he and his brothers were provided with a copy of a 'Greek Exercises'.

[49] See T.W. Thompson, pp. 89-90.

[50] Christopher Wordsworth, *Memoir of William Wordsworth*, I, p. 10.

a 'tame imitation of Pope's versification, and a little in his style'.[51] Wordsworth left his earliest surviving work unpublished until the end of his life. Even since the publication of it in 1851 the 'Lines Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead' has received little scholarly attention. The 'Lines', however, appears to me to deserve recognition for its significance not only as an early example of Wordsworth's 'style' but also as a record of his views on education in his Hawkshead period.

The poem begins with a boy's encounter with the 'Power of EDUCATION':

> . . . before mine eyes,
> The Power of EDUCATION seemed to rise;
> Not she whose rigid precepts trained the boy
> Dead to the sense of every finer joy;
> Nor that vile wretch who bade the tender age
> Spurn Reason's law and humour Passion's rage;
> But she who trains the generous British youth
> In the bright paths of fair majestic Truth:[52]

In this period most of the public and grammar schools prevented pupils from enjoying 'every finer joy'(8) by following the Eton's 'rigid precepts'(7). The passage suggests that Hawkshead Grammar School neither 'bade the tender age /Spurn Reason's law and humour Passion's rage'(9-10) nor aimed to 'curb, exalt, reform the tender mind'(18). Unlike most of the public and grammar schools, Hawkshead Grammar School trained pupils to be the 'generous British youth' by helping them 'humour' 'Reason's law' and '[s]purn' 'Passion's rage'(10-11) .

Johnston calls Hawkshead Grammar School a 'thriving establishment for the preparation of sons of the rising middle class'. He asserts that even though influenced by the theories of Rousseau, Hawkshead still stuck to the academic discipline of 'hard old-fashioned classicism, combined with hard new-fashioned mathematics', and paid little attention to 'the value of the boy's freedom out of class'.[53] However, Wordsworth's description of 'Hawkshead's happy roof' in the 'Lines' makes one reconsider Johnston's account:

> There have I loved to show the tender age

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[51] Christopher Wordsworth, *Memoir of William Wordsworth*, I, p. 10.
[52] *PW*, I, 259-261. 'Lines Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead', 5-12.
[53] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, pp. 69-70.

The golden precepts of the classic page;
To lead the mind to those Elysian plains
Where, throned in gold, immortal Science reigns;
Fair to the view is sacred Truth display'd,
In all the majesty of light array'd,
To teach, on rapid wings, the curious soul
To roam from heaven to heaven, from pole to pole,
From thence to search the mystic cause of things,
And follow Nature to her secret springs;
Nor less to guide the fluctuating youth
Firm in the sacred paths of moral truth,
To regulate the mind's disordered frame,
And quench the passions kindling into flame;
The glimmering fires of Virtue to enlarge,
And purge from Vice's dross my tender charge.
('Lines Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead', 67 - 82)

Wordsworth's 'Lines' leads me to agree with Moorman that Taylor not only taught the classics and Euclid but also tried out an 'experimental and "scientific" approach to knowledge which had been gaining ground during the last two centuries'.[54]

The passage also suggests that pupils may have been allowed freedom both in and out of class. In class schoolmasters aimed to encourage each pupil's 'curious soul'(73) to 'search the mystic cause of things'(75). Out of class pupils tried to satisfy their enthusiasm for science by 'follow[ing] Nature to her secret springs'(76). Wordsworth later recollected that pupils had devoted some of their time out of class either to 'playing soberly on the hill top near them' or to 'more boisterous diversions in the fields beneath'.[55] In the 1805 *Prelude* Wordsworth says, 'May books and nature be [children's] early joy'.[56] The 'Lines' suggests that schoolmasters enabled pupils to regard both 'books' and 'nature' as their 'joy'.[57] Like Wordsworth and Fleming, Hawkshead pupils may have become familiar with the 'golden precepts of the classic page'(68) by '[r]epeating favourite verses with one voice,/Or conning more, as happy as the birds'.[58]

In this period most of the public and grammar schoolmasters terrified their pupils into dumb, respectful submission. At Hawkshead, on the other

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[54] Moorman, pp. 56-7.
[55] Wordsworth's unpublished draft for his *Guide to the Lakes* (MS. Dove Cottage); quoted from T.W. Thompson, p. 343.
[56] The 1805 *Prelude*, V, 447.
[57] The 1805 *Prelude*, V, 447.
[58] The 1805 *Prelude*, V, 606-7.

hand, friendship existed not only among pupils but also between schoolmasters and pupils. As Wordsworth later recollected in 'The Fountain, A Conversation' (published in the second-volume edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in January 1801), pupils and schoolmasters were like 'Friends' talking with 'open heart, and tongue/Affectionate and true'.[59] With Taylor and Bowman Wordsworth discussed the books he was reading and, with at least Taylor, the verses he was planning to compose.[60]

Johnston states that Hawkshead's system of education was under the influence of Rousseau,[61] though I would rather suggest that it showed more similarities with Joseph Priestley's educational principles. Whereas Rousseau attempted to keep Émile under his control throughout the whole course of education, Priestley asserts in his *Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life* (1760), 'Let the lecturer give his pupils all encouragement to enter occasionally into the conversation, by proposing queries, or making any objections or remarks that may occur to them'.[62] What the lecturer should draw upon is, as Priestley states, a 'proper mixture of dignity and freedom': with 'dignity' he should 'prevent, or repress, all impertinent and unreasonable remarks' while 'freedom' would 'encourage those who are modest and pertinent'.[63] Wordsworth's 'Lines Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead' suggests that Hawkshead's educational method resembles Priestley's way of encouraging the active participation of pupils. There is no way of knowing whether or to what extent Taylor had been influenced by Priestley's educational principles, though he most likely paid attention to one of the most well-known educationists of the late eighteenth century. The fact that the Hawkshead School Library possessed a copy of Priestley's *Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* suggests the influence of Priestley not only on schoolmasters but also on pupils.[64]

However, there is a marked difference between Hawkshead's method of teaching and Priestley's. Priestley insists on advantages of emulation and competition:

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[59] William Wordsworth, 'The Fountain, A Conversation', 1-3.

[60] See 'The Fountain, A Conversation', 9-16.

[61] See Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, pp. 69-70.

[62] Joseph Priestley, *Miscellaneous Observations Relating to Education. More especially, as it reflects the Conduct of the Mind. To which is added, An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active* Life, ed. Jeffrey Stern (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995), p. 219 (hereafter referred to as *Essay*).

[63] Priestley, *Essay*, p. 221.

[64] See T.W. Thompson, p. 352. Priestley's *Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* (1777) was donated by Joshua Dixon on his graduation.

> it is evident that no person can acquire any kind of courage, that can be depended upon, in a competition with his equals, unless he be educated among his equals; so that their exercises can be in common.[65]

Having seen the successful result of his teaching at one of the most famous dissenting academies at Warrington, Priestley confidently says, 'real emulation, in the contests with equals, will operate much more speedily and effectually to the same end'.[66] Not only the dissenting academies but also public institutions encouraged emulation and competition amongst pupils by offering prizes. Hawkshead, on the other hand, practised not competition but 'generous Emulation'('Lines', 63), and offered no prize.[67] Consequently, pupils, like Wordsworth and Fleming, encouraged one another to achieve their potential. In doing so, they proceeded in 'the sacred paths of moral truth'('Lines', 78), and became convinced of the significance of friendship. Wordsworth's 'Lines' suggests that Hawkshead's reputation as one of the best seminaries in the north of England may have reflected a successful result of its system of 'generous Emulation'('Lines', 63).

James Bowen states that throughout the centuries preceding the nineteenth most public institutions had been 'the instruments of the ruling class', which had aimed at the 'the promotion of class identity'.[68] Hawkshead, on the other hand, intended to train 'the generous British youth /In the bright paths of fair majestic Truth'.[69] In politics Hawkshead seems to have been liberal, since even though having a considerable number of sons of the West Indian merchants,[70] it allowed pupils to express their

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[65] Priestley, *Essay*, p. 77.

[66] Priestley, *Essay*, p. 78.

[67] See Eileen Jay, *Wordsworth at Colthouse* (Kendal: Westmorland Gazette, 1970), pp. 28-9. The son of Thomas Bowman (headmaster after William Taylor's death till January 1829) recollected in 1885 that Wordsworth had 'never once won a prize at school' since there had been 'none in those days'. See also T.W. Thompson, p. 344.

[68] Bowen, pp. 163-4.

[69] 'Lines Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead', 11-2.

[70] See T.W. Thompson, p. 335. William Senhouse, Surveyor-General of Barbados and the Leeward Islands; James Lowther, born in Barbados 17 February 1773 and died in the West Indies in 1794; William Wood, born in Barbados 22 February 1776 and died in 1800; and Samson, born in Barbados 17 February 1777 (date of his death not known). The two elder boys, later joined by Samson, must have gone to Hawkshead about 1783, and left it for St. Bees in the second half of 1786.

disapproval of the slave trade.[71] As a son of Lowther's political business agent, Wordsworth had paid attention to local politics since his early childhood. In his Hawkshead period he most likely widened his views in discussing contemporary political issues. Wordsworth was to become interested in radical politics in his Cambridge period, and to join the reform movement during his first residence in London in spring 1791. His first experience of political discussion, I think, may be traced back to his Hawkshead period.

Wordsworth's contemporary biographer, George Seale Phillips, insisted that the growth of the poet's mind and heart had been achieved not at school but through his transcendental experience:

> School did very little for him, nor Cambridge, nor even books, until a comparatively late period of his life. But both nature and poetry had always a great and transcendent charm for him.[72]

Like Phillips, many of the critics and biographers, both contemporary and modern, have paid less attention to Wordsworth's education at school than to his close connection with Nature. However, I would like to suggest that Hawkshead Grammar School contributed much to the growth of Wordsworth's mind and heart by encouraging his interest not only in literature but also in the contemporary social and political issues, in particular the discussion of education.

Having developed his mind and heart at Hawkshead, Wordsworth proceeded to St. John's College, Cambridge, in October 1787. He dressed himself up in 'splendid clothes', 'hose of silk', and '[g]littering hair', and said, 'My spirit was up, my thoughts were full of hope'.[73] He was no longer a boisterous boy wandering round Esthwaite's shores and the Cumbrian fields but a gentleman 'roaming' in the social meetings:

> The weeks went roundly on,
> With invitations, suppers, wine and fruit,
> Smooth housekeeping within, and all without
> Liberal and suiting gentleman's array.

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[71] See T.W. Thompson, pp. 316-7. Charles Farish, Wordsworth's friend at Hawkshead and Cambridge, composed in June 1784 a poem, 'To a Friend & School-fellow', and expressed his disapproval of 'direful Slav'ry' and his pity for the 'Captive Negro'.

[72] 'January Searle' (George Searle Phillips), *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*; quoted from *Lives of the Great Romantics*, vol. 3, p. 187.

[73] The 1805 *Prelude*, III, 16, 23, 36-7.

(The 1805 *Prelude*, III, 40 - 43)

However, Wordsworth's excitement did not last long. Even though he pretended to be a smart gentleman, he could not change his background. Without parents, rank, or wealth, he found himself ineligible for 'gentleman's array':

> Not seldom I had melancholy thoughts
> From personal and family regards
> (Wishing to hope without a hope), some fears
> About my future worldly maintenance,
> And, more than all, a strangeness in my mind,
> A feeling that I was not for that hour,
> Nor for that place.
>
> (The 1805 *Prelude*, III, 75 - 81)

In order to overcome 'melancholy thoughts' and 'fears', he attempted to prove himself suited to Cambridge. His means was to distinguish himself by his academic attainments.

It was, however, not long before Wordsworth found the difference between Hawkshead's educational method and Cambridge's. Whereas Hawkshead gave pupils neither prize nor reward, Cambridge drew upon prizes. Having rarely experienced competition, Wordsworth had 'melancholy thoughts'(75) from the competitive element in studying for examinations:

> . . . of important days -
> Examinations, when the man was weighed
> As in the balance! - of excessive hopes,
> Tremblings withal and commendable fears,
> Small jealousies and triumphs good or bad,
> I make short mention. Things they were which then
> I did not love, nor do I love them now:
> Such glory was but little sought by me,
> And little won.
>
> (The 1805 *Prelude*, III, 64 - 72)

What Wordsworth did love was Hawkshead's method of education, namely 'generous Emulation'.[74] In his Cambridge period Wordsworth composed *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, though not aiming to win 'glory'

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[74] 'Lines Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead', 63.

but to develop his literary talents. Unlike in his Hawkshead period, Wordsworth found neither intellectual stimulation nor friendship in his tutors at Cambridge. The most significant connection that Wordsworth made in his Cambridge period was that with his sister Dorothy, with whom he had reunion after nine years, in July 1787.

1. 3. Dorothy at Halifax, Penrith, and Forncett

Some three months after her mother's death, on 13 June 1778, Dorothy was separated from the Wordsworth family and brought to Halifax in Yorkshire to be taken care of by her mother's cousin, Elizabeth Threlkeld.[75] In the same house Miss Threlkeld had looked after her orphaned two nephews and three nieces (Samuel, Martha, Edward, Anne, and Elizabeth Ferguson) since 1773.[76] To the five orphans and Dorothy Miss Threlkeld appears to have been an affectionate mother. Dorothy may have regarded the orphans as more miserable than herself and treated them with sisterly affection. Even far apart from her father and brothers, Dorothy most likely felt a strong family tie with Miss Threlkeld and the other five children at Halifax. As Mary Moorman and others suggest, Dorothy had been so 'well loved and cared for' by Miss Threlkeld as to spend a happy childhood at Halifax.[77]

In January 1781 Dorothy, then aged nine, entered a boarding school at Hipperholme, near Halifax. She may have already experienced schooling at Penrith and Cockermouth, though, like Wordsworth, having picked up only the rudiments of reading, spelling, arithmetic, and Christianity. As Reed suggests, Dorothy may have spent half a year or more at Hipperholme, though there is no sufficient evidence or firm record of her education.[78] It is, however, less likely that the nine-year-old girl had achieved much progress in less than a year. Whereas the Wordsworth boys formed close connections with their teachers as well as with other pupils at Hawkshead, Dorothy presumably left the school at Hipperholme without having known much of her teachers or other pupils. Yet it was outside the school that Dorothy found 'several real friends', in particular Jane Pollard, the fifth of

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[75] See Reed, p. 46. Elizabeth Threlkeld (1745-1837) was the first cousin of Dorothy's mother.
[76] See *EY*, 2n. The five children had been under the care of their aunt, Miss Threlkeld, since the death of their mother, Mrs Ferguson, in 1773. Since Mr Ferguson died in 1775, Miss Threlkeld had managed his haberdasher's shop as well.
[77] Moorman, p. 19. See also Robert Gittings and Jo Manton, *Dorothy Wordsworth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 4 .
[78] See Reed p. 53. Reed refers to Dorothy's father's accounts note payment of £6 for her for "Half a Year's Board at Hipperholme".

the six daughters of a wool-merchant whose house was close to Miss Threlkeld's house and haberdasher's shop.[79] Dorothy became friends with this girl of the same age, her two-year elder sister, Ellen, and her one-year younger sister, Harriot.[80] What Dorothy received from Jane was not only friendship but also 'literary intelligence'. With Jane and her sisters Dorothy spent much time reading books both in English and French, and exchanging opinions on some interesting subjects.[81] Just as Hawkshead provided Wordsworth with friendship and intellectual guidance, Halifax enabled Dorothy to find the company of those on the same level both in talents and virtue. In addition, Dorothy experienced domestic happiness while living with Miss Threlkeld and her nephews and nieces as well as spending much time with Jane and her family. In her Halifax period Dorothy had achieved what Wordsworth had done at Hawkshead: namely, the growth of her mind and heart and the development of her literary talents.

In May 1787 Dorothy, then aged fifteen-and-a-half, concluded her life at Halifax and moved to Penrith to live with her aged Cookson grandparents. Her existing earliest letter was dated late July 1787, soon after her reunion with her brothers at Penrith. In this letter to Jane Pollard, Dorothy lamented the change after her brothers' departure:

> I can bear the ill nature of all my relations, for the affection of my brothers consoles me in all my Griefs, but how soon alas! shall I be deprived of this consolation! and how soon shall I again become melancholy, even more melancholy than before. (*EY*, 3)

Having not seen her brothers since June 1778, Dorothy was so pleased with their affection as to determine to bear the 'ill nature' of her Cookson grandparents. However, what she shared with her brothers was not only a happy memory:

> Many a time have Wm, J, C, and myself shed tears together, tears of bitterest sorrow, we all of us, each day, feel more sensibly the loss we sustained when we were deprived of our parents, and each day do we receive fresh insults . . . (*EY*, 3)

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[79] See *EY*, 2 , 2n.
[80] *EY*, 5n.
[81] See *EY*, 8.

In her next letter to Jane of 6 and 7 August 1787 Dorothy went into details about the 'bitterest sorrow' following her father's death. Lord Lonsdale refused to pay what he had owed John Wordsworth for service, which was, Dorothy believed, 'less than 4 thousand and 7 hundred pounds'.[82] Consequently, the financial difficulties forced the Wordsworth children to receive 'fresh insults' from their guardians. Dorothy said, '[We] always finish our conversations which generally take a melancholy turn, with wishing we had a father and a home'(*EY*, 5). With little hope of forming a 'home' with her brothers, Dorothy concluded this letter by suggesting to Jane, 'the domestick happiness which now reigns in your family may never once be interrupted'(*EY*, 5). It seems explicable that when moving into Racedown Lodge in September 1795, Dorothy hoped that 'domestick happiness' would reign in her first home with Wordsworth.

Since her brothers' departure Dorothy had attempted to console herself by saying, 'no one can deprive me of the sweet consolation of pouring out my sorrows into the bosom of a brother or a friend'(*EY*, 7). Even far apart from her brothers and friends, she had a place into which she could pour out her sorrows: namely the imaginary world. In her Halifax period Dorothy had developed her 'literary intelligence' by reading books both in English and French and exchanging opinions with Jane and her sisters.[83] During her brothers' stay she may have spared some time discussing literature from the classics to the contemporary. In a letter of early August 1787 Dorothy listed a 'Catalog[ue]' of her 'very pretty little collection of Books' received from her brothers (*EY*, 8). The classics, in particular 'the Iliad', were highly recommended by William. The contemporary consisted of Henry Fielding's works, *The Poetical Works of William Hayley*, John Gregory's *Father's Legacy to his Daughters*, and an original French version of *Gil Blas*. In addition, her collection contained the most well-known English works by John Milton and Oliver Goldsmith. Her eldest brother Richard promised to send her Shakespeare's plays and the *Spectator*.[84] Dorothy said, 'I am determined to re[ad a] great deal now both in French and English' for as many hours as possible (*EY*, 8). There is no evidence to know how many books Dorothy managed to read while living

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[82] *EY*, 7. For more about Lonsdale's debt to John Wordsworth, see *EY*, 4n. Although Wordsworth's relatives sued Lonsdale in January 1788, none of the debt of about 5,000 pounds was paid during Lonsdale's lifetime. It was in 1804 that the Wordsworth children jointly received 8,500 pounds from Lonsdale's son.

[83] See *EY*, 8.

[84] See *EY*, 8, 8n.

with her grandparents at Penrith. However, it seems certain that the more 'melancholy'(*EY*, 3) she felt, the keener she became on reading. It was in her Racedown period from September 1795 to July 1797 that Dorothy was enabled and encouraged by Wordsworth to develop her literary intelligence. Yet even as early as summer 1787 she may have already started developing her literary talents with the assistance and encouragement of Wordsworth.

Dorothy's escape into the imaginary world provided by books seems to have stimulated the 'ill nature'(*EY*, 3) of her grandparents. She had expected that '[Grandmother] would feel for her grandchild all the tenderness of a mother particularly when that Grandchild had no other parent'.[85] Yet, unlike Miss Threlkeld, Mrs. Cookson showed her orphaned granddaughter 'little of tenderness in her manner or of anything affectionate' and treated her with 'cold insensibility'(*EY*, 9). Her grandfather also annoyed her by his 'ill-nature'(*EY*, 9). Having spent nearly half a year with her grandparents, Dorothy considered herself not 'as at home' but 'like a stranger'(*EY*, 9-10). She felt like a 'stranger' in particular when she was obliged by her grandmother to 'set upon the occasion as *notable* a face as if [she had been] delighted with [*work*]'(*EY*, 10). 'My Grm's taste and mine so ill agree', Dorothy said, since her grandmother praised a 'very *sedate clever, notable* girl', who appears to her to have been a 'mixture of Ignorance, Pride, affectation, self-conceit, and affected notability'(*EY*, 10). Her literary talents may have led her to say

> . . . it cannot be expected that those who have not had the advantages of Education can know as much as those who have. (*EY*, 10)

Dorothy thought of 'Education' as the only means by which both men and women could make themselves properly '*notable*'. Before this letter began, Wordsworth had visited Dorothy at Penrith on his way to Cambridge. Dorothy's interest in 'Education' seems to have been stimulated by Wordsworth, who hoped that his education at Cambridge would make himself '*notable*'.

At around this time Dorothy attended Penrith Grammar School. There is no sufficient evidence stating how long and which subjects Dorothy studied at this school, though it is highly probable that having not yet been allowed to study at the universities, girls were expected only to develop

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[85] *EY*, 9. Dorothy to Jane Pollard, November, 1787.

their abilities of reading, spelling, and arithmetic. Even if Dorothy's intellectual development at this school was not marked, her close relationship with the master, the Revd. John Cowper, and his daughter Dorothy assuredly convinced her of one of the 'advantages' of public education, namely friendship.[86] Since November 1787 the 'advantages' of private education had been offered to Dorothy by her uncle, the Revd. William Cookson. Every morning Uncle William gave Dorothy two hours' tutorial of 'French', 'Arithmetic', and 'Geography'(*EY*, 11). These subjects were not singular, but taught to some upper- and upper-middle-class girls by tutors and governesses. What should be noted is that Dorothy spent some time practising to 'write'(*EY*, 11). As is well-known, Dorothy wrote a considerable amount of journals and some poetic compositions through her life. Her enthusiasm for writing seems to me to have been encouraged much by Uncle William at this time. In addition, Dorothy mentioned in her letter with the 'greatest obligations' that Uncle William intended not to coerce her but to encourage her to study by showing 'new proofs of his affection' every day (*EY*, 11). To Dorothy this thirty-three-year-old man appears to have been more like a brother and friend than an uncle and tutor. Just as Wordsworth owed much of the growth of his mind and heart to his friendly schoolmasters at Hawkshead, Dorothy regarded friendship between a preceptor and a pupil as necessary for the advantages of education.

Dorothy developed her ideals of female education and expressed them in her next letter to Jane of December 1787. A daughter of a prosperous wool merchant at Halifax was referred to as a 'Learned Lady', since she possessed her copies of 'Locke upon the Human Understanding, Euclid, and several other such books'.[87] In this period most upper- and upper-middle-class girls keenly learned some rudiments of literature to prepare themselves for social meetings while regarding Philosophy and science as less significant. There is no firm evidence to confirm whether Dorothy read Locke and Euclid at this time. However, her interest in Locke and Euclid suggests that she agreed with leading figures of female education like Mary Wollstonecraft that women should achieve the same intellectual standard as men.

The year of 1787 concluded with the unexpected death of Dorothy's grandfather.[88] She was left alone with her grandmother who forced her to

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[86] See *EY*, 10, 10n.
[87] See *EY*, 14 , 14n. The lady was Mary Waterhouse, who was as old as Dorothy.
[88] See *EY*, 15n. Her grandfather was buried at Penrith on 22 December 1787.

think of nothing but domestic '*work*'(see *EY*, 10). However, the 'great and unexpected changes' happened to her late in November 1788 (*EY*, 18). Uncle William asked Dorothy to live with him and his newly married wife Dorothy (née Cowper, daughter of the master at Penrith Grammar School) at his rectory of Forncett in Norfolk. 'I have now nothing left to wish for on my own account', Dorothy expressed her excitement in a letter to Jane of early December 1788, since 'every day gives me fresh proofs of my Uncle and Aunt's goodness'(*EY*, 18). She said, 'to live in the country and with such kind friends! have I not every reason to be thankful?'(*EY*, 18). She was to find a similar reason to be thankful when moving into Racedown in September 1795, then into Alfoxden in July 1797.

On 4 November 1788 Dorothy and the Cooksons spent a day with Wordsworth at Cambridge on their way to Norwich. Dorothy was glad to tell her brother about her promising future while feeling 'odd' to see him among those with 'powdered heads', 'black caps', and 'gowns'(*EY*, 19). Bowen asserts that in the eighteenth century the universities functioned as 'finishing schools for the privileged classes'.[89] Dorothy's impression of Cambridge seems to support Bowen's statement. She may have regarded her brother's life at Cambridge as less advantageous than her life at Forncett, which was a 'little village entirely inhabited by farmers' who were 'very decent kind of people'(*EY*, 19). The Cooksons and Dorothy sketched out their life at Forncett as follows:

> We are to have prayers at nine oclock . . . after breakfast is over we are to read, write, and I am to improve myself in French till twelve oclock, when we are to walk or to visit our sick and poor neighbours till three, which is our dinner hour; and after tea my Uncle will sit with us and either read to us or not as he and we find ourselves inclined. (*EY*, 19)

They planned to devote the morning to studying on their own, and to spend the whole evening together. Whereas Dorothy had been a sole pupil in her Penrith period, she would now have a fellow pupil, Aunt Dorothy, with whom she could compare her progress. Uncle William, as a tutor and fellow student, would encourage Dorothy and his wife to pursue their aims by their own means.

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[89] Bowen, p. 166.

In July 1789 Wordsworth paid his first visit to Forncett. A month previously, he had concluded his second year by distinguishing himself in the Classics. However, he failed the examination of mathematics, which was compulsory at Cambridge in this period.[90] Not fond of mathematics, Wordsworth was fully aware that it would be almost impossible for him to obtain a fellowship. He may have considered a means to distinguish himself away from academic attainments after seeing the Cooksons and Dorothy taking care of 'the poor and sick' and trying to 'do a great deal of good' in the parish.[91]

Some weeks after Wordsworth's stay Uncle William opened the Sunday School for children. After studying with her uncle for nearly two years, Dorothy began to teach at this 'little school'(*EY*, 26). In January 1790 Dorothy wrote to Jane Pollard about the details of her teaching. She had 'nine scholars' which consisted of 'one very bright scholar, some very tolerable, and one or two very bad'(*EY*, 26) The school hours were divided into three parts: 'on Sunday mornings from nine till church time [half past ten]: at noon from half past one till three: and at night from four till half past 5'(*EY*, 26). Dorothy instructed the children 'in reading and spelling', and Uncle William taught them 'prayers humns and catechisms'(*EY*, 26). As Alan Richardson points out, 'the guiding spirit of the Sunday School' in the late eighteenth century was to instruct the lower classes in reading and the Church catechism, and writing was often banned from the curriculum.[92] Uncle William seems to have been influenced by 'the guiding spirit of the Sunday School'. For example, he encouraged the active participation of the children by 'distribut[ing] rewards such as books, caps, aprons &c.'(*EY*, 26) However, Uncle William completely disapproved of the upper-class educationists like Hannah More, who intended to train the lower-class children to be obedient and industrious.[93] In fact, he had already formed a 'more extensive' and apparently exclusive plan for a 'School of Industry', at which the lower-class girls would receive instruction of intellectual and practical utility.[94] The school would have a 'mistress who [was] to teach

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[90] Moorman, p. 97, suggests that Wordsworth did not take the mathematical papers after the first year.

[91] See *EY*, 19, 23.

[92] Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 66 (hereafter referred to as 'Richardson').

[93] See Richardson, pp. 73, 84-5.

[94] *EY*, 26. See also *EY*, 67. In her letter of 7 December 1791, Dorothy said, 'We are going to establish a sort of School of Industry'. Only a month later Uncle William became Canon of Windsor, and left Forncett.

[the girls] spinning, knitting &c in the week days'(*EY*, 26). As Richardson suggests, the School of Industry of this period was expected to form an 'industrious' and obedient character.[95] Uncle William's projected school, on the other hand, would provide the lower-class girls with a means of independence, both social and economic.

Not long after the commencement of the Sunday school, Dorothy began to teach some children 'every Wednesday and Saturday evening' as well as on Sundays.[96] Dorothy's contribution to the school was remarked by William Wilberforce, MP for Yorkshire and philanthropist, who stayed with his best friend William Cookson at Forncett at Christmas 1789.[97] Wilberforce gave Dorothy some of the most well-known books on the Sunday school education in this period: *A Practical Treatise on Regeneration* by John Witherspoon (Scottish minister and president of Princeton University), Sarah Trimmer's *Oeconomy of Charity*, and Philip Doddridge's *Family Expositor*.[98] In early March 1790 small pox prevented Dorothy's pupils from attending the school.[99] Dorothy devoted that unexpected holiday mainly to scrutinizing the books that Wilberforce had given to her.[100] From Mrs. Sarah Trimmer's *Oeconomy of Charity*, Dorothy most likely imbibed some ideas for the promotion and management of the projected School of Industry.[101] To prepare herself for instructing children in reading the Bible, Dorothy intended to read the New Testament with reference to Doddridge's didactic commentary in his *Family Expositor*.[102] Dorothy's first-hand experience of teaching the catechism, I think, was to significantly influence Wordsworth's reaction against the catechism in his 'Anecdote for Fathers'(published in *Lyrical Ballads* in September 1798).

As soon as her pupils came back to school, Dorothy most likely tried out what she had learned from the books. In January 1791 the birth of Christopher Cookson obliged Dorothy to devote herself more to domestic duties than before. Consequently, she said in a letter of 7 December 1791, '[t]he operations of my little School have been suspended ever since the Birth

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[95] Richardson, p. 73.
[96] See *EY*, 26.
[97] For Wilberforce, see *EY*, 26n. William Wilberforce (1759-1833) was a fellow student with William Cookson at St John's College, Cambridge.
[98] See *EY*, 27.
[99] See *EY*, 29. Dorothy to Jane Pollard, 30 April 1790.
[100] See *EY*, 30-31.
[101] See *EY*, 30n.-31n. Trimmer's book is concerned with Queen Charlotte's contribution to the promotion and management of Sunday Schools at Windsor.
[102] See *EY*, 31n. Doddridge was a Nonconformist preacher and writer of great influence with whom Wilberforce had a close connection.

of Christopher'(*EY*, 67). Nevertheless the plan for a 'School of Industry' had not yet been utterly abandoned:

> We are going to establish a sort of School of Industry; my Uncle is at present in Treaty about a House for the purpose; my Aunt and I are to superintend the Business. (*EY*, 67)

The 'House proper for the purpose' had not yet been procured, though the Cooksons and Dorothy were optimistic about their plan at this time. Not long before Dorothy wrote this letter, Wilberforce came to Forncett, and stayed with the Cooksons and Dorothy for some days. He most likely had the chance to talk with them about the 'House for the purpose' and the 'Business' of the school.

However, neither the 'little school' at Forncett nor the projected 'School of Industry' was referred to again in Dorothy's existing letters. One of the reasons was that on 20 January 1792 William Cookson was installed as Canon of Windsor. He was required to spend three months in the summer of that year at Windsor. The other reason was that the birth of the Cooksons' third child, William, in April 1792 prevented them from devoting themselves to the school. Dorothy regarded herself as 'more necessary than ever' to her aunt. The abandonment of the Sunday school, however, did not deprive Dorothy of her commitment to education. Taking care of three Cookson children at home, Dorothy may have formed her own method of fostering infants. In mid June 1793 Mrs. Cookson gave birth to her fourth child, George. Dorothy presumably became interested in the child's growth by considering the differences of Mary (baptized 9 March 1790), Christopher (born 27 January 1791), William (baptized 13 April 1792) and George (born 15 June 1793). She may have noticed that the education of children should consist of progressive stages. The care of the Cookson children may have so fully preoccupied Dorothy as to allow her little time for her own study. However, her experience of education in her Forncett period prepared Dorothy for her life with Wordsworth at Racedown, where she would begin fostering a two-year-and-a-half motherless boy in September 1795. The advantages of education which Dorothy had experienced at Halifax, Penrith, and Forncett, I believe, would contribute much to the development of Wordsworth's ideals of education.

2. The Pupil in the Revolutionary Vortex: January 1791 - April 1795

2. 1. The London Radical World: Spring 1791

Wordsworth later recollected in the 1805 *Prelude* that he had spent his first year at Cambridge in 'submissive idleness'(III, 669) and his second year with 'no settled plan'(VI, 29). The more 'melancholy thoughts'(III, 75) he had from the competitive element in studying for examinations and prizes, the more anxious he became to be 'a lodger in [the] house /Of letters'(VI, 32-3).[1] However, he acknowledged

> A baffling and a hindrance, a control
> Which made the thought of planning for myself
> A course of independent study seem
> An act of disobedience towards them
> Who loved me, proud rebellion and unkind.
> (The 1805 *Prelude*, VI, 37 - 41)

During his final year at Cambridge Wordsworth was so fully aware of his relatives' 'control'(37) that he concealed his hope to be a man of letters. Nevertheless his 'act of disobedience'(40) was noted by his uncle, the Revd. William Cookson, when he spent most of the summer holiday of 1790 not preparing for the final exams but travelling through revolutionary France and the Alps.[2] In January 1791 Wordsworth at last unveiled an act of 'rebellion'(41) towards his relatives by failing to receive a fellowship.

Soon after graduation Wordsworth left Cambridge for London. Book VII of the 1805 *Prelude* suggests how he began his first 'Residence in London':

> Yet undetermined to what plan of life
> I should adhere, and seeming thence to have
> A little space of intermediate time
> Loose and at full command, to London first
> I turned, if not in calmness, nevertheless
> In no disturbance of excessive hope -

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[1] Reed, p. 92, suggests that Wordsworth was unclassed in the reports of the June 1789 college examinations, but placed among those who 'distinguished [themselves] in the Classics'. Christopher Wordsworth, *Memoir of William Wordsworth*, I, p. 48, later recollected, 'The week before [Wordsworth] took his degree he passed his time in reading Clarissa Harlowe'.

[2] See *EY*, 37. In a letter to Dorothy of 6 and 16 September 1790 Wordsworth said that Uncle Cookson may have been aquatinted with his having given up all thoughts of a fellowship, so may perhaps not have been pleased at his walking tour.

> At ease from all ambition personal,
> Frugal as there was need, and though self-willed,
> Yet temperate and reserved, and wholly free
> From dangerous passions.
>
> (The 1805 *Prelude*, VII, 63 - 72)

Even in London Wordsworth may not have been completely free from his relatives' 'control'(VI, 37). The twenty-one-year-old Wordsworth seems to have tried to avoid any 'act of disobedience'(VI, 40) towards his relatives such as 'excessive hope'(VII, 68) and 'ambition personal'(VII, 69) for his future literary career, though he felt reluctant to do so.

Wordsworth revealed his 'hope' and 'ambition' only to Dorothy. Having discussed literature during his stays at Penrith and Forncett, Dorothy was fully aware of Wordsworth's 'great attachment to poetry'.[3] Nevertheless she thought of 'poetry' as 'not the most likely thing to produce his advancement in the world'(*EY*, 52). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries most of the university-educated middle-class men became clergymen,[4] and Wordsworth was expected by his uncle, William Cookson (then rector at Forncett), and other relatives to go into Anglican orders when he reached twenty three years old.[5] To this plan Wordsworth should adhere, since he admitted, 'I had done nothing by which to distinguish myself at the university'.[6] He had composed some poems including *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, though his poetic voice had rarely been heard by the public.[7] In London Wordsworth may have intended to spend the 'little space of intermediate time' of the next two years considering whether he would conform to his relatives' plan or he would pursue his personal ambition to be 'a lodger in [the] house /Of letters'(VI, 32-3).

Not long after his arrival in London, Wordsworth may have noticed that his background was more crucial to his future prospects than his talents. 'Obscurely did I live', he said, since his non-aristocratic background prevented him from 'courting the society of men /By literature, or elegance,

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[3] *EY*, 52. Dorothy to Jane Pollard, 26 June 1791.

[4] See Lawrence Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900', *Past and Present*, 42 (1969), 69-139; pp. 94, 75 (hereafter referred to as 'Stone').

[5] See *EY*, 58n.

[6] See *EY*, 120. Wordsworth to William Mathews, 23 May 1794 .

[7] In March 1787 Wordsworth's first published poem, 'Sonnet, On Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress' appeared in the *European Magazine*. *An Evening Walk* was composed chiefly in 1788-9 and *Descriptive Sketches* in early summer 1792, both of which were published in January 1793.

or rank,/ Distinguished'.[8] In mid June 1791, having moved out of London three weeks previously, Wordsworth recollected that his four months had passed in a 'strange manner':

> sometimes whirled about by the vortex of its *strenua inertia*, and sometimes thrown by the eddy into a corner of the stream, where I lay in almost motionless indolence.[9]

Wordsworth seems to have been at a complete loss as to how he could distinguish himself. However, in the subsequent passage he said that he had experienced 'many very pleasant hours' as well (*EY*, 49). Wordsworth went into no further details about his activities in London either in his letters or in the 1805 *Prelude*. Wordsworth's first contact with the London radical world in spring 1791 has been discussed by critics and biographers such as Stephen Gill, Mark Reed, Kenneth R. Johnston, and Nicholas Roe. I would like to examine his first attempt as a pupil in the revolutionary vortex by considering how and why Wordsworth became interested in the British reform movement, and what he may have learned through his connections with the rational reformists. In doing so, I will explore the reason why Wordsworth experienced both 'very pleasant hours' and 'motionless indolence' during his first residence in London from January to May 1791.

Since the outbreak of the French Revolution in July 1789, London had been the centre of the British reform movement. Two months before Wordsworth's arrival in London, in November 1790, Edmund Burke, who had already been distinguished by 'literature', 'elegance', and 'rank',[10] published *Reflections on the Revolution in France, and the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to That Event* as a royalist's reply to Richard Price's sermon of November 4 1789 delivered at the Old Jewry meetinghouse in praise of the French Revolution. Throughout the *Reflections* Burke consistently insisted on his belief in 'entailed inheritance'.[11] In his opinion men of no inherited rank or wealth did not deserve recognition for their virtues and abilities because 'all the good things . . . connected with manners and with civilization' had depended for ages upon 'its natural protectors and

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[8] The 1805 *Prelude*, IX, 20-3.

[9] *EY*, 49. Wordsworth to Mathews, 17 June 1791. Jonathan Wordsworth, *Four Texts*, 576n., suggests that Wordsworth may have quoted Horace's famous oxymoron *'strenua nos exercet inertia'* to describe his strenuous idleness.

[10] The 1805 *Prelude*, IX, 22. It was in 1757 that Burke's book on aesthetics, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, was published.

[11] Burke, *Reflections*, p. 173.

guardians', namely '[t]he nobility and the clergy'.[12] Under the French National Assembly, Burke warned, 'learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude'.[13]

In Britain those excluded from 'learning' in this period were not only the lower-middle- and lower-class poor. The dissenters also had been prevented from studying at universities by the demand for subscription to the 39 articles of the Anglican Church.[14] However, the dissenters confidently distinguished themselves from those called by Burke 'a swinish multitude', or, men of 'a low education, a mean contracted view of things, a sordid mercenary occupation'.[15] According to Isaac Kramnick, although by 1770 the dissenters constituted only 7 percent of the population, they are said to have contributed to more than 40 percent of all entrepreneurs in England.[16] Nicholas Roe insists that in the late eighteenth century the dissenting culture was 'the motor of progressive intellectual and political life in England'.[17] William St Clair also suggests that the dissenters were so confident of their 'superior levels of education' and 'superior moral sense' as to regard themselves as 'intellectual leaders', 'progressive thinkers', and the representatives of enlightenment.[18] Burke's *Reflections* led the dissenting intellectuals to be more deeply involved in the reform of the existing system of inequality.

Although not from a dissenting background, Wordsworth may have been interested in the dissenters, who had aimed at social evolution by means of education even before the outbreak of the French Revolution. To find a connection with the dissenters, Wordsworth contacted his Unitarian relatives, Elizabeth Rawson (née Threlkeld, recently married, who had looked after Dorothy at Halifax in Yorkshire in 1778 - 87) and her husband, William Rawson.[19] Mr. and Mrs. Rawson probably understood

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[12] Burke, *Reflections*, p. 173.

[13] Burke, *Reflections*, p. 173.

[14] For the 39 Articles, see Sir William Searle Holdsworth, *A History of English Law*, vol. X (London: Methuen Sweet and Maxwell, 1938), p. 113. In 1779 dissenting ministers and teachers were relieved from the necessity of assenting to certain of the 39 Articles of the Church of England. However, the Articles continued to exclude the dissenters from studying at the universities.

[15] Burke, *Reflections*, pp. 173, 139.

[16] Isaac Kramnick, *Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 44-51.

[17] Roe, *Culture of Dissent*, pp. 15, 27.

[18] William St Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys: The biography of a family* (London: Faber, 1989), p. 30 (hereafter referred to as 'St Clair').

[19] See *EY*, 38. They married at Halifax on 7 March 1791. See also *EY*, 45. In a letter to Jane Pollard of 23 May 1791 Dorothy said, 'My Aunt . . . saw my Brothers Rd. and Wm. in town.'

Wordsworth's interest in the reform movement, and introduced him to their Unitarian friend Samuel Nicholson, a member of the Society for Constitutional Information, whose shop in Cateaton Street was near St. Paul's Churchyard, the centre for radical publications.[20] 'Mr. Nicholson of Cateaton Street', Wordsworth later told Isabella Fenwick, 'used often to invite me to dine with him on Sundays; and I took that opportunity (Mr. N. being a Dissenter) of going to hear Fawcett' at the Old Jewry meetinghouse.[21] At Nicholson's Sunday dinners and at the sermons of Joseph Fawcett Wordsworth had the opportunities of meeting a considerable number of the dissenters.

Johnston points out that Nicholson may have introduced Wordsworth to Thomas Holcroft, with whom Nicholson had written a novel in 1780, and George Dyer, who had already been known to Wordsworth as a close friend of the Hawkshead schoolmaster William Taylor.[22] In spring 1791 Holcroft was known as a literary reviewer, and more significantly, as William Godwin's closest friend.[23] Holcroft might well have been able to give some advice and suggestion to a young man of literary ambition, though he may have known little about Wordsworth in spring 1791. It seems less likely that when Holcroft reviewed *Descriptive Sketches* in the *Monthly Review* (XII, October 1793), he remembered the young poet without 'sufficiently powerful' mind to examine the 'thoughts' and to put them 'into rhythm'.[24] It was on 27 February 1795 that Holcroft and Dyer met Wordsworth again at the meeting of the leading reformists including Godwin.[25] Wordsworth's possible first meeting with Holcroft and Dyer in spring 1791, therefore, deserves recognition as a preparatory step towards his more active careers in the London radical world in spring 1793 and towards his discussions of Godwin's rational principles in spring 1795.

While 'sauntering' in the centre of the British reform movement, Wordsworth was frequently lured by the 'bookstalls' where he had the chance to see the replies to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.[26]

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[20] See Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 248.

[21] *PW*, V, 374-5. The notes concerning *The Excursion* dictated by Wordsworth to Isabella Fenwick in 1843.

[22] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, pp. 437-8.

[23] See St Clair, pp. 39, 41. Holcroft visited Godwin's lodgings nearly every day and looked after his private pupil.

[24] The *Monthly Review*, 12 (October 1793), 216-8; quoted from William Wordsworth, *Descriptive Sketches*, ed. Eric Birdsall (Cornell Wordsworth Series, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 300-1 (hereafter referred to as *Cornell DS*).

[25] See Reed, p. 164.

[26] See The 1805 *Prelude*, Book IX, 31-4.

It was probably not long before he noticed that 'J. Johnson, No. 72, St. Paul's Church-Yard' had published the first reply to Burke, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men, in a Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* by Mary Wollstonecraft, in December 1790, the most effective attack on the *Reflections*, the first part of *The Rights of Man* by Thomas Paine, on 22 February 1791, and a periodical for the enlightenment of the middle-class radicals, the *Analytical Review*, since May 1788. Roe places the significance of Nicholson in his influence on Wordsworth's attitude to the French Revolution, to parliamentary reform, and to the pamphlet war initiated by Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in November 1790.[27] Roe also regards Nicolson as a link between Wordsworth and Joseph Johnson, whose shop in St Paul's Churchyard was near his house in Cateaton Street.[28] Johnston disagrees with Roe by saying that Wordsworth had not formed an acquaintance with Johnson until 'he came with a recommendation from his new acquaintances in the English Club of Paris' in spring 1793.[29] I agree with Roe that Wordsworth did not remain in such a state of 'motionless indolence'(*EY*, 49) as not to form a connection with Johnson, for much of his four months in London was spent near Johnson's bookshop; Nicholson's house where he frequently had Sunday dinner, the Old Jewry meetinghouse where Nicholson took him after dinner to hear the sermons of Joseph Fowcett, and Richard Wordsworth's quarters in Gray's Inn to which he paid some visits were all close to St Paul's churchyard.[30]

Wordsworth may have known not only Johnson's political publications but also his contribution to the civilization of the dissenters. Leslie F. Chard II. points out that as early as the 1760s Johnson began to publish inexpensive reprints of standard titles for popular consumption, since his dissenting background and his Unitarian faith alike strengthened a belief that learning would reinforce the reform of social and economic inequalities.[31] Chard also insists that publishing Priestley's 'massive and varied' writings, Johnson had established himself as a 'go-between for the different sides of the intellectual life of his time; historical, medical,

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[27] Roe, *Radical Years*, pp. 27-8.

[28] Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 27.

[29] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 331.

[30] See Roe, *Radical Years*, pp. 23, 23n. and Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, pp. 241-2. See also Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, the front-page, Horwood's map of London, 1792-1799.

[31] Leslie F. Chard II., 'Joseph Johnson: Father of the Book Trade', *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 79 (1975-6),51-82; p. 61 (hereafter referred to as 'Joseph Johnson'). Chard suggests that Johnson published the reprints of Goldsmith's *History of England*, Richardson's *Clarissa*, and Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*.

philosophical, and scientific'.[32] In addition, his bookshop at St Paul's churchyard was a meeting place for his friends and authors such as Richard Price, Joseph Priestley, William Blake, Henry Fuseli, Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft, and William Godwin (whose first visit was in November 1791, though the regular visits began in 1796).[33]

Chard states that in the 1790s Johnson's circle was held together 'less by political liberalism than by a common interest in ideas, free enquiry, and creative expression in various fields'.[34] Although not indicated by Chard, I would like to suggest that Johnson's circle may have been influenced by Priestley, one of Johnson's closest friends, who suggested in his *Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life* (published by Johnson in 1778) that lecturers should give pupils 'all encouragement to enter occasionally into the conversation, by proposing queries, or making any objections or remarks that [might] occur to them'.[35] It seems likely and possible that Nicholson may well have drawn upon Priestley's method at his Sunday dinners and encouraged Wordsworth to express his opinions. Through his discussions with Nicholson, Johnson, and other dissenting reformists Wordsworth most likely knew much about the dissenters' ideals of social reform by means of the enlightenment of individuals.

In spring 1791 Wordsworth may have known that Johnson contributed much to female education by publishing Wollstonecraft's three works, *Mary: A Fiction* (1788), *Original Stories from Real Life: With Conversations to Regulate the Affections and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness* (1788), and *The Female Reader; or, Miscellaneous Pieces, in Prose and Verse; Selected from the Best Writers, and Disposed under Proper Hands; for the Improvement of Young Women* (1789).[36] Johnson also published Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), and enabled her to reproach Burke for his indifference to women and the poor, which pervaded not only his *Reflections* but also his aesthetic views.[37] With Johnson's assistance, Wollstonecraft was to develop her ideals of female education and

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[32] Chard, 'Joseph Johnson', pp. 57, 52, 60.

[33] See Chard, 'Joseph Johnson', p. 62. Johnson held weekly dinners for his friends and authors at his lodgings above his bookshop. For the friendship of Johnson and Godwin, see Chard, 'Joseph Johnson', p. 68.

[34] Chard, 'Joseph Johnson', p. 68.

[35] Priestley, *Essay*, p. 218.

[36] For the connection between Johnson and Wollstonecraft, see Mary Wollstonecraft, *Political Writings*, ed. Janet Todd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. ix, xxxii.

[37] See Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 100. Burke insists that women affect traits of the 'Beautiful', namely the 'weakness and imperfection'.

to fully express her principles and methods in her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1793. Duncan Wu suggests that Wordsworth most likely read Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Men* while forming a connection with Johnson in spring 1791.[38] If the fact was so, Wordsworth knew much of Wollstonecraft's views of education which occupied most of the *Vindication of the Rights of Men*. Even without any chance of reading the *Vindication of the Rights of Men*, he may have had some opportunities to discuss Wollstonecraft's works with Nicholson, Johnson, and other dissenters. Wordsworth's instruction of Dorothy, which began at Racedown in September 1795, seems to me to have been influenced either by his knowledge of Wollstonecraft's works or by his discussions of the ideals of female education with the dissenters.

Having spent nearly four months in the vortex of the British reform movement, Wordsworth most likely had 'very pleasant hours' with some well-known figures. However, he recollected in the 1805 *Prelude* that in spring 1791 he had been one of the 'slaves unrespited of low pursuits' who had 'no law, no meaning, and no end'[39] to contribute to the discussions with the dissenters like Nicholson and Johnson. Consequently, as he said in a letter of 17 June 1791, he often fell into 'motionless indolence'.[40] In the meantime, he became more fully aware of the '[o]pression under which even highest minds /Must labour, whence the strongest [were] not free',[41] namely, the pressure from his relatives to go into the Church, which had excluded the dissenters from politics and culture. He had not yet formed his own 'law' or found his 'meaning' for society, though, I think, he may have been convinced of his 'end', namely, the reform of social and economic inequalities through the civilization of all social classes.

To disengage himself from 'the vortex of its *strenua inertia*'(*EY*, 49), Wordsworth left London in late May 1791 for Plas Yn Llan, Llngynhafal, Wales, where he was to stay with his Cambridge friend, Robert Jones, until early September. On 13 July 1790, the eve of the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, Wordsworth and Jones arrived in Calais and began a tour through France and the Alps. During their walking tour, they witnessed that 'the whole nation was mad with joy, in consequence of the

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[38] Wu, p. 152.

[39] The 1805 *Prelude*, VII, 700-4. Jonathan Wordsworth, *Four Texts*, p. 604n., suggests that the lines 700-4 were drawn from a passage drafted for 'Michael'(published in the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*) which was concerned with the behaviour of Michael's prodigal son, Luke, in London.

[40] See *EY*, 49.

[41] The 1805 *Prelude*, VII, 705-6.

revolution'(*EY*, 36). The most impressive 'consequence of the revolution' was described in a letter to Dorothy written at Keswi, a small village on the lake of Constance, on 6 and 16 September 1790:

> We not only found the French a much less imposing people, but that politeness diffused thro the lowest ranks had an air so engaging, that you could scarce attribute it to any other cause than real benevolence. During the time which was near a month which we were in France, we had not once to complain of the smallest deficiency in civility in any person, much less of any positive rudeness. (*EY*, 36)

When Wordsworth published the poem based on this tour, entitled *Descriptive Sketches*, in January 1793, he dedicated it to Jones and said

> You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed them together; consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my colouring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.[42]

Wordsworth's dedication suggests that even though busy preparing for the final exams in autumn 1790, they may have spent some time together recollecting their experience in revolutionary France. During his stay with Jones in May - September 1791 Wordsworth most likely recollected with Jones the spots in France where they had observed 'politeness', 'benevolence', and 'civility' in all social classes. Wordsworth may have found an opportunity to talk with Jones about the dissenting intellectuals, who had promoted the enlightenment of society in Britain by developing 'politeness', 'benevolence', and 'civility' in individuals.

There is no evidence to suggest that Jones was enthusiastic about the British reform movement. However, he may have shown an interest in the dissenting educationists, for he had devoted himself to private tuition at Cambridge since graduation. In this period it was not unusual for newly-admitted Bachelors of Arts to take one or two pupils before they were elected fellows. Their method was more or less based on what was then usual at grammar schools and universities: namely, the formal training by drill and repetition. Spending more than three months together,

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42 *P. W.* I, 43.

Wordsworth and Jones most likely recollected their experience at Cambridge of studying for examinations and prizes, and possibly discussed the dissenters' method of providing pupils with 'all encouragement to enter occasionally into the conversation, by proposing queries, or making any objections or remarks that [might] occur to them'.[43] It seems possible that Wordsworth became interested in private tuition as a way in which he could experiment in developing 'politeness', 'benevolence', and 'civility'(*EY*, 36) in the individual.

In the spring and summer of 1791 Wordsworth was in contact with another Cambridge friend to discuss education, William Mathews. Mathews was a son of a Methodist bookseller in London, who welcomed the revolution in France as the advent of liberty both religious and political in July 1789. However, on leaving Cambridge in late January 1791, Mathews, like Wordsworth, agreed with his Anglican mother to go into the Church when he became of age. Soon after graduation, Mathews left for Leicestershire where he was to devote the intermitting time to teaching English at the Free School at Appleby Magna.[44] Wordsworth wrote to Mathews as soon as he settled in London. In April 1791 Mathews sent a reply, in which he said that he had been 'agreeably situated in respect to domestic enjoyment', and his school hours had not been too much under 'a Gothic regulation'.[45] On 17 June 1791 Wordsworth wrote a reply to Mathews at Jones's house in Wales. He was so interested in Mathews's life as a teacher as to say, 'You will not attribute it merely to politeness if I now make a few enquiries about you, and the manner in which your time passes'(*EY*, 49). It was, however, not long before Wordsworth received Mathews's disappointing answers to his enquiries. For Mathews teaching was nothing but the 'unproductive labour' which consumed his time and wore his spirits out.[46] To make matters worse, by mid September 1791 Mathews was forced by his Methodist father to give up his plan to enter the Church. In the meantime, Wordsworth was offered a curacy at Harwich by his cousin, John Robinson.[47] In a letter of 23 September Wordsworth said to Mathews, 'I should be unwilling to accept [the curacy] on any other

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[43] Priestley, *Essay*, p. 218.

[44] See *EY*, 48n. and 58n. Mathews's father was a London bookseller, medicine-vendor, and lay-preacher in a Methodist chapel, whereas his mother was a member of the Church of England. See also *EY*, 111. Mathews's father's bookshop was at 18 Strand.

[45] See *EY*, 48. In a letter of 17 June 1791 Wordsworth said that he had tried to write to Mathews two months previously, but was prevented from doing so by his idleness.

[46] *EY*, 55. Wordsworth to Mathews, 3 August, 1791.

[47] See *EY*, 57, 57n.,58, and 58n. Wordsworth to Mathews, 23 September 1791.

conditions'(*EY*, 59). 'It is evident', he said, 'there are a thousand ways in which a person of your education might get his bread, as a recompense for his labour'(*EY*, 59). He asked Mathews to leave the church school and to pursue a way to 'cultivate the powers of his mind' in London.[48]

Mathews may have regarded Wordsworth's suggestion as neither practical nor viable, since he remained in Leicestershire for another four months until January 1792. Nevertheless he was stimulated by Wordsworth to attempt to know more about one of the 'thousand ways' to 'cultivate the powers of his mind', namely 'modern Literature'(*EY*, 56). In his reply of 3 August 1791 Wordsworth confessed that he had only ever read *Tristram Shandy* and the *Spectator*.[49] What he was familiar with in this period were cheap tracts and political pamphlets. Having heard from Wordsworth about his London life, Mathews presumably noticed that his friend thought of political publications as one of the 'thousand ways' to 'cultivate the powers of his mind'(*EY*, 59). It was some two years and a half later, in May 1794, that Wordsworth and Mathews found a way to cultivate the powers of their minds, namely a scheme for a periodical for the enlightenment of society.

In early September 1791 Wordsworth left Wales for London. Wordsworth's aim was to tell his cousin John Robinson that he could not accept the offer of a curacy at Harwich because he was not yet of age for Anglican orders. At around this time his uncle William Cookson proposed that Wordsworth should begin 'a course of Oriental Literature' at Cambridge, which would be, according to Cookson, 'the best field for a person to distinguish himself in as a man of Letters'(*EY*, 62). However, Cookson, like Dorothy, may have regarded 'poetry' as 'not the most likely thing to produce his advancement in the world'(*EY*, 52) and intended to prepare his nephew not for the field of 'Letters' but for Anglican orders. Soon after his meeting with Robinson, Wordsworth left for Cambridge and began a 'course of Oriental Literature' of Latin and Greek.[50] It was not long before he may have noticed that his uncle had no intention of educating him to be a 'man of Letters'. On 23 September 1791 Wordsworth sent a letter to Mathews, who still remained in Leicestershire. He drew Mathews's attention to the similarities of their present situations: both were looking for a means of independence outside the Church; both had nothing to

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[48] See *EY*, 59.
[49] See *EY*, 56. Wordsworth to Mathews, 3 August 1791.
[50] See *EY*, 62. Wordsworth to Mathews, 23 November 1791.

distinguish themselves except 'Industry'; and both had no one to rely on (see *EY*, 58-9). At this time Wordsworth may have hoped to discuss with Mathews where and how to find the utility of their 'Industry' outside the Church. He concluded this letter by saying, 'I shall be impatient to hear from you. Direct to me here [Cambridge]. I shall stay here till the University fills'(*EY*, 59).

It was a month later, on 23 October 1791, that Wordsworth abandoned the course, and left Cambridge for London. He visited his brother, Richard, and told him that by the time of his taking orders he would remain in 'some retired Place in France' which would be 'less expensive and more improving than in England'.[51] Johnston points out two reasons for this decision; one was to disengage himself from Cookson's plan, and the other was to improve his French so as to become a 'tutor for young noblemen on the grand tour'.[52] I would like to suggest another reason - that Wordsworth may have meant to rekindle his enthusiasm for the civilization of the individual, which he had experienced during his walking tour through France and the Alps in summer 1790. At the beginning of his first residence in London in spring 1791 Wordsworth was one of the 'slaves unrespited of low pursuits' who had 'no law, no meaning, and no end'.[53] By his moving out of London in May 1791, he may have been convinced of his 'end', namely the reform of social and economic inequalities through the civilization of all social classes, though having not yet formed his 'law' or found his 'meaning' for society. When Wordsworth told his brother about his plan for a residence in France, he was, I think, anxious to be a man of letters, who could advocate the welfare of society by civilizing the reader. In observing men of republican ardour in France, Wordsworth may have hoped to elaborate his political, social, and philosophical principles.

2. 2. Revolutionary France: November 1791 - December 1792

In November 1791 Wordsworth called on Charlotte Smith at Brighton, and asked her to write the letters of introduction for him to Helen Maria Williams and other leading figures of the British society in Paris. On 23 November he said in a letter to Mathews, 'I assure you considerable pleasure from my sojourn on the other side of the water, and some little improvement'(*EY*, 62). In return he expected Mathews to supply him with

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[51] *EY*, 61n. Richard Wordsworth to his uncle, 7 November 1791.
[52] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 281.
[53] The 1805 *Prelude*, VII, 700-4.

some 'pleasure' and 'improvement' from Britain. In particular, Wordsworth drew Mathews's attention to the latest publications both political and literary, and concluded this letter by saying, 'I shall be happy to hear from you immediately' about 'what you read'(*EY*, 62).

Three days later, on 26 November 1791, Wordsworth left Brighton and crossed the Channel. He arrived at Dieppe on the following day, and reached Paris on 30 November. Having promised Mathews to send him some interesting information from France, Wordsworth may have paid keen attention to the society of British radicals in Paris as well as to the French National Assembly. Those who had already been and would be known to Wordsworth in Paris are listed by Johnston as follows: James Losh, elder brother of Wordsworth's Hawkshead schoolmate John Losh; Felix Vaughan, the fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge; Tom Wedgwood, the youngest of the wealthy ceramist's three sons; Francis Tweddell, younger brother of Wordsworth's contemporary at Cambridge James Tweddell; and James Watt Jr., son of the great scientist and inventor.[54] It seems unlikely that having 'sojourned a few days and visited /In haste each spot of old and recent fame',[55] Wordsworth had enough time to form or resume connections with all of those mentioned by Johnston. However, he presumably managed to know about his possible links with the society of British radicals in Paris. It was a year later, in November 1792, that Wordsworth became friends with James Losh, and contacted some British radicals in Paris.

On 5 December 1791 Wordsworth left Paris for Orléans, where he fell in love with Annette Vallon. Wordsworth's love affair with Annette has already been discussed in detail by Legouis, Moorman, Gill, Johnston, and others, and there is no need to discuss it in this thesis.[56] I would like to focus on Wordsworth's consistent enthusiasm for the collaborative literary scheme with Mathews. In spring 1792 Wordsworth followed Annette to Blois, and remained there until the end of October of that year. As soon as he settled in Blois, on 19 May 1792, Wordsworth made a reply to Mathews's letter, which he had received on leaving Orléans. Mathews said in a letter that he had formed 'many schemes' for his future since he had been

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[54] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 289.

[55] The 1805 *Prelude*, IX, 41-2.

[56] Emile Legouis in *William Wordsworth and Annette Vallon* (London, 1922) describes Wordsworth's treatment of his mistress and child as an ordinary occurrence in which a young English man might well have thought himself beyond reproach. Moorman, pp. 187-8, says that in summer 1792 Wordsworth was 'deeply and anxiously in love' on the one hand and was 'becoming a proselyte of the Revolution' on the other.

discharged from the church school.[57] In the last five months in France Wordsworth had shown 'vital interest'(IX, 108) in 'the system of a republic' in which 'wealth and titles were in less esteem /Than talents and successful industry'(IX, 235-6). He may have spent much of his four months in Blois considering a way in which he could contribute his 'talents' and 'industry' to the establishment of 'the system of a republic' in Britain.

Stimulated by the republican surroundings, Wordsworth asked Mathews in a letter of 19 May to pursue together in the 'field of Letters' both a 'method of obtaining an Independence' and a means to contribute to the British reform movement (*EY*, 76). Mathews appears to Wordsworth to have been the most ideal collaborator, for at this time he lived with his father, a Methodist and bookseller in the Strand, in the hope of finding 'some method of obtaining an Independence' by making use of his 'talents and acquirements'(*EY*, 76). 'Your residence in London', Wordsworth said to Mathews, 'gives you . . . an excellent opportunity of starting some thing or other'. In particular, Wordsworth asked Mathews

> Would it not be possible for you to form an acquaintance with some of the publishing booksellers of London, from whom you might get some hints of what sort of works would be the most likely to answer?(*EY*, 76)

Having spent four months in the centre of the pamphlet war in London in spring 1791, Wordsworth certainly knew that the radical pamphlets like Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* would be the most favourably received by a wide audience. To start a scheme for a political publication, Wordsworth may have expected Mathews to make use of his father's connections with the dissenting literary circles like Joseph Johnson.

To encourage Mathews's interest in the scheme, Wordsworth insisted on the necessity of the reform of social and economic inequalities:

> You have the happiness of being born in a free country, where every road is open, where talents and industry are more liberally rewarded than amongst any other nation of the Universe. (*EY*, 77)

Both Wordsworth and Mathews had already fully understood that in the existing system of society, rank and wealth were more significant than 'talents and industry'. Wordsworth seems to have been convinced that their

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[57] See *EY*, 76. Mathews's letter does not exist, but Wordsworth repeated some part of it.

scheme would contribute to the establishment of a 'free country' where 'talents' and 'industry' would be 'liberally rewarded'. Wordsworth said, 'I shall return to England in the autumn or the beginning of Winter' of 1792. His letter to Mathews of 19 May 1792 concluded by saying

> I am not without the expectation of meeting you a circumstance which be assured would give me the greatest pleasure, as we might then more advantageously than by Letter consult upon some literary scheme, a project which I have much at heart. (*EY*, 78).

For the next few months Mathews was expected to seek some intellectual and financial support in London while Wordsworth was forming his ideals of society by referring to an example of the system of a 'free country', namely France.

To Wordsworth's letter Mathews made a prompt reply. However, he disappointed Wordsworth by saying that he would make a 'voyage up the Mediterranean' in order to prepare himself for the 'priesthood'.[58] Wordsworth's reply was dispatched immediately, though it was not delivered before Mathews's departure of late May or early June 1792. On 9 November 1793 Mathews was admitted at the Middle Temple. There is no way of knowing when and why Mathews abandoned his plan for entering Anglican orders. What is known to us is that in spring 1794 Mathews began to reconsider the collaborative literary scheme, and submitted some schemes to Wordsworth.[59]

After Mathews's departure for the Mediterranean, Wordsworth may have attempted to look for another collaborator, or, the person who could encourage him to develop his political views and literary talents. It was in spring 1792 that he became acquainted with a French general called Michel-Arnaud Bacharetie Beaupuy. A number of biographers and critics have discussed the influence of Beaupuy on Wordsworth, and in particular on his sympathetic treatment of the poor in his later works.[60] I would like to consider the way in which Beaupuy had encouraged Wordsworth to widen his philosophical views and to develop his literary talents. In doing so, I

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[58] See *EY*, 111-2. Wordsworth to Mathews, 17 February 1794.

[59] See *EY*, 112n. Shaver suggests that Mathews had already gone abroad by 5 June when Wordsworth's letter probably got to London. Mathews may not have been in England when *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches* were published on 29 January 1793.

[60] For instance, see Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, pp. 303, 307.

hope to suggest that Beaupuy may have enabled Wordsworth to form his method of education.

In Book IX of the 1805 *Prelude*, entitled 'Residence in France', Wordsworth recollected 'Beaupuy'(IX, 426), whose name deserved to '[s]tand near the worthiest of antiquity'(IX, 427). In his London period of spring 1791 Wordsworth had attended Nicholson's Sunday dinners and some meetings of the dissenters. However, as he said in *The Prelude*, he had regarded himself as one of the 'slaves unrespited of low pursuits' who had 'no law, no meaning, and no end'[61] to contribute to the discussions with the dissenters like Nicholson and Johnson. Now in Blois Wordsworth, as a 'stranger' and 'youth', won the 'indulgence' from 'the courteous' who 'tolerated' his 'half-learnt speech'(IX, 194-7) and tried to give voice to what he thought, such as 'rational liberty and hope in man, /Justice and peace'.[62] In addition, Beaupuy was such an 'upright man and tolerant'(IX, 337) as to enable and encourage Wordsworth to express his political opinions like 'the end /Of civil government, and its wisest forms'(IX, 329-30).

In Britain the ruling class prevented the lower-middle and lower classes from learning to write because writing would provide them with the means to express their opinions and might encourage them to aspire beyond their station.[63] Now in Blois Wordsworth discussed with Beaupuy the ill-effects of the 'ignorance in the labouring multitude'(IX, 336), and became convinced that the education of the poor (those whom Burke had spurned as an uneducated, 'swinish multitude' in his *Reflections*)[64] would be an essential preparation for a more thoroughgoing reform of society in Britain. Furthermore, Wordsworth saw Beaupuy love 'the mean and the obscure' as his fellow beings.[65] Through his friendship with Beaupuy, Wordsworth, I think, developed his principles of the amelioration of mankind through the civilization of the individual. He also learned from Beaupuy that a liberal method of instruction would encourage the individual to improve his social organization and culture as well as his way of life.

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[61] See the 1805 *Prelude*, VII, 700-4.

[62] See the 1805 *Prelude*, IX, 397-403.

[63] Stone, pp. 89-90, points out some examples; Jonas Hanway and Hannah More believed that writing was not necessary for people's morals. The National Society for the fostering of elementary education, which had been set up by the Anglican Church, stated, 'it is not proposed that the children of the poor be . . . taught to write and cipher'. The Wesleyan Methodists prohibited the teaching of writing at their schools.

[64] Burke, *Reflections*, p. 173.

[65] See The 1805 *Prelude*, IX, 313-4.

Beaupuy left Blois on 27 July 1792. After staying another two months, Wordsworth left Blois in late September. At this time Wordsworth was in urgent need of money, since Annette was expecting a baby in December. It was readily explicable for Wordsworth that Cookson and other Anglican relatives would not welcome his French Catholic mistress and illegitimate child. He was anxious to insist that 'wealth and titles' should be 'in less esteem /Than talents and successful industry'(IX, 235-6), though having no power to do so. His destination was not England but Paris, where he most likely expected to find someone in the society of British radicals to help him to raise money in London. He presumably hoped to discuss with some like-minded figures a way in which they could draw upon their 'talents' and 'industry' for the British reform movement.

As Johnston suggests, there were a considerable number of British radicals in Paris.[66] Among those who became close to Wordsworth in November 1792 was James Losh. Like Wordsworth and Mathews, Losh had studied for the Church since his graduation from Cambridge in 1786. However, on becoming a Unitarian, he abandoned his plan for entering Anglican orders. His enthusiasm for religious and political liberty brought him to France in 1792. It was on or soon after his arrival in Paris on 29 October 1792, the day of Louvet's denunciation of Robespierre, that Wordsworth may have met Losh. At this time the Friends of the Rights of Man Associated at Paris (known as the "British Club") held a meeting at White's Hotel in order to discuss what they could draw upon from the French Revolution for the reform and revolution in Britain. On 18 November 1792 the British Club reached the height of its revolutionary enthusiasm; about a hundred of the British radicals gathered at White's to draw up a manifesto of solidarity with the National Convention. The document was presented to the Convention on 28 November by fifty British signatories. The first on the list was Francis Tweddell whom Wordsworth may have seen by this time. John Oswald, one of the signatories, was well-known to both Wordsworth and Losh. Although the fifty signatures include neither Wordsworth's name nor Losh's, Roe states that both may well have been one of the fifty guests who were also present at White's Hotel on 18 November but did not sign.[67] And Johnston asserts that staying near

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[66] See Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 289.

[67] For the details about the "British Club", see Roe, *Radical Years*, pp. 81-2.

White's, Wordsworth most likely became interested in and probably was involved in the activities of the British Club.[68]

It is certain that Wordsworth supported the radicals at the White's Hotel meeting of 18 November who hoped a 'close union' between France and Britain and 'universal peace' of 'entire Europe'.[69] However, he admitted that he was

> An insignificant stranger and obscure,
> Mean as I was, and little graced with powers
> Of eloquence even in my native speech,
> And all unfit for tumult and intrigue,
> (The 1805 *Prelude*, X, 130 - 133)

He hoped to be a man of letters who would take up a 'service' for a 'cause so great, /However dangerous'(X, 135-6), though having not yet developed enough 'powers /Of eloquence' to do so. If Wordsworth was present at White's Hotel on 18 November 1792, he may well have thought that he was too much an 'insignificant stranger' so remained 'obscure'.

'With unextinguished taper', as Wordsworth said in *The Prelude*, he may have watched the activities of the British Club from his room while '[r]eading at intervals'(X, 61-2). What he was reading at this time may have consisted not only of political pamphlets but also of his poems, *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, which he intended to publish in London. It seems likely that Wordsworth showed his poems to some friends and acquaintances during his stay in Paris. Losh most likely read Wordsworth's poems, and probably provided him with some advice. Johnston suggests that soon after he returned from Paris, Wordsworth visited Joseph Johnson's bookshop with a recommendation from his new acquaintances in the British Club.[70] If this was so, Wordsworth's several weeks' stay in Paris in autumn 1792 was a successful preparation for his literary career in London, even though he was an 'insignificant stranger and obscure, /Mean' among the members of the British Club.

Wordsworth's close connection with Losh deserves recognition for its influence on his future activities, both literary and political. In autumn 1792 in Paris while Wordsworth was feeling like an 'insignificant stranger'(X, 130), Losh was forming connections with the British radicals and the French

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[68] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 324.
[69] J.G.Alger, *Paris 1789-1794* (London, 1902), pp. 325-8; quoted from Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 81.
[70] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 331.

revolutionists. After his return from Paris in December 1792, Losh established himself as a leading figure of the London radical world. In February 1793 he found the means by which he could put his political ideals into practice in William Godwin's *Political Justice*. By following Godwin, Losh played an active role in the reform movement until ill health compelled him to retire from the London radical world in spring 1795.[71] There is no record to suggest that Wordsworth kept in touch with Losh during his stay in London in December 1792 - July 1793. It is, however, most likely that Losh read Wordsworth's published poems, and that Wordsworth heard of Losh's political activities. It was in March 1797 that Wordsworth and Losh found themselves pursuing the same end in the same way, namely the progress of human improvement by means of education. Their shared interest, I think, began as early as November 1792 in Paris.

Besides Losh, I would like to mention the young men of revolutionary enthusiasm who had not become acquainted with Wordsworth in Paris in 1792, though were to become important to his future career: John Frederick and Azariah Pinney, who were to become Wordsworth's close friends in his Racedown period (September 1795 - July 1797); and Tom Wedgwood, who was to discuss his educational scheme with Wordsworth in September 1797.

2. 3. Wordsworth's Voice: January 1793 - February 1795

Soon after his arrival in London in late November or early December 1792 Wordsworth visited Johnson's bookshop at St Paul's Churchyard. The recommendation from his acquaintances in the British Club may have drawn Johnson's attention to the poet Wordsworth, who then was nothing more than a 'poet only to [himself], to men /Useless'.[72] It was on 29 January 1793 that *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches* were published by Johnson. Some weeks later Wordsworth's poems were discussed by his sister Dorothy and younger brother Christopher.[73] In a letter to Jane Pollard of 16 February Dorothy stated that there were 'many Passages exquisitely beautiful' which had been 'viewed with a Poet's eye' and 'portrayed with a Poet's pencil'(*EY*, 89). However, she focused more on 'many Faults', in particular '[o]bscurity' and 'a too frequent use of some particular expressions and uncommon words'(*EY*, 89). She regretted that Wordsworth

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[71] See Roe, *Radical Years*, pp. 191-3. Roe provides us with detailed information about Losh's radical career in Paris in 1792 and in London in 1793-5.

[72] The 1805 *Prelude*, X, 199-200.

[73] See *EY*, 89. Dorothy discussed Wordsworth's poems with Christopher who stayed with her and the Cookson family at Forncett in February.

had not 'submit[ed] the works to the Inspection of some Friends before their Publication', since his faults were 'such as a young Poet was most likely to fall into and least likely to discover, and what the Suggestions of a Friend would easily have made him see and at once correct'(*EY*, 89). In saying so, Dorothy may have regretted that Wordsworth had not yet found any friend who could help him go beyond a mere description of the 'beautiful' natural scenery. The 'very bulky Criticism'(*EY*, 89) by Dorothy and Christopher most certainly led Wordsworth to begin the revision of *An Evening Walk* on the one hand, and drew his attention to the significance of a 'Friend' of literary talents on the other.

Although severely criticized by Dorothy and Christopher, *An Evening Walk* was quite well received by the critics. For instance, the March issue of the *Analytical Review* (Joseph Johnson's journal) began a favourable review of *An Evening Walk* by calling it a 'descriptive poem' by 'the hand of an able copyist of nature'.[74] Other reviewers also more or less highly evaluated *An Evening Walk* as a series of 'paintings'[75] of 'new and picturesque imagery'[76] 'with a spirit and elegance'.[77] As Wordsworth himself later recollected, *An Evening Walk* dealt chiefly with 'the infinite variety of natural appearances'[78] which might be appreciated by those familiar with the publications of the picturesque tradition like William Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye* (1782). Some reviewers treated the passage about the female beggar not only as 'descriptive' but also as 'affecting' enough to remind the reader of John Langhorne's description of the war widow in *The Country Justice* (1774-7), though the latter, as the *Critical Review* said, had more 'strength'.[79]

Descriptive Sketches reflects Wordsworth's 'Pedestrian Tour in the Italian, Grison, Swiss, and Savoyard Alps' of summer 1790 in which he observed the successful consequences of the republican system in France and in Switzerland. However, most of the reviewers treated *Descriptive Sketches* as 'descriptive poetry' like *An Evening Walk*. In the *Monthly Review* (XII, October 1793, issued 1 November) Thomas Holcroft, a man of political

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[74] The *Analytical Review*, 15 (March 1793, issued c. 1 April), 296-7; quoted from William Wordsworth, *An Evening Walk*, ed. J. Averill (Cornell Wordsworth Series, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 303 (hereafter referred to as *Cornell EW*).

[75] The *European Magazine*, 24 (September 1793), 192-3; *Cornell EW*, 304.

[76] The *Critical Review*, n.s., 8 (July 1793, issued 1 August), 347-8; *Cornell EW*, 303.

[77] The *Gentlemen's Magazine*, 64 (March 1794), 252-3; *Cornell EW*, 306.

[78] The notes dictated by Wordsworth to Isabella Fenwick in 1843; quoted from *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart, 3 vols (London: Edward Moxon, Son, and Co., 1876), vol. III, 5.

[79] The *Critical Review*, n.s., 8 (July 1793), 347-8; *Cornell EW*, 303-4.

and literary fame and close friend of Godwin's, attacked the mediocrity of Wordsworth's poetic talents and the deficiency in his politics. Holcroft's review of *Descriptive Sketches* concluded with his severe judgement on Wordsworth's future prospects:

> He is the happiest of mortals, and plods, and is forlorn, and has a wounded heart. How often shall we in vain advise those, who are so delighted with their own thoughts that they cannot forbear from putting them into rhyme, to examine those thoughts until they understand them? No man will ever be a poet, till his mind be sufficiently powerful to sustain this labour.[80]

Wordsworth himself certainly noticed that his 'mind' and 'heart' had not yet been 'powerful' enough to go any further than the picturesque scenery in *An Evening Walk* or to present a clear account of his revolutionary ideals in *Descriptive Sketches*.

On 4 November 1793, only three days after the appearance of Holcroft's review, Christopher Wordsworth discussed his brother's poems by referring to Holcroft as well as to his and Dorothy's criticism with his Cambridge friends including Samuel Taylor Coleridge, then a student at Jesus. It was in late August or early September 1795 that Coleridge first met Wordsworth in Bristol. However, even as early as his Cambridge days Coleridge reviewed Wordsworth's poems with a poet's eye, and presumably noticed the faults suggested by Dorothy and Holcroft. By their first meeting of summer 1795 Coleridge had already prepared himself to be a friend who could enable Wordsworth to find his faults and help him to correct them.

It was on 1 February 1793, only three days after the publication of Wordsworth's poems, that France declared war on Britain. Ten days later, on 11 February, Britain declared war on France. The war forced Wordsworth to postpone his plan to live with Annette and their new-born child in France, though it ironically released him from his financial difficulties. Consequently, as Roe suggests, Wordsworth devoted himself to 'the democratic reform movement in its campaign for parliamentary reform, and in opposing the government's policies of war and repression'.[81] To demonstrate his ideals of social reform to a wide audience, he may have thought of a political tract as the most effective means. In fact, as

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[80] The *Monthly Review*, 12 (October 1793), 216-8; *Cornell DS*, 300-1.
[81] Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 121.

Richardson suggests, the first part of Paine's *Rights of Man* (published as a reply to Burke's *Reflections* by Johnson on 22 February 1791) brought out 'the spectacle of a mass readership in the 1790s' by selling as many as 50,000 copies, about three times more than Burke's *Reflections*. The popularity of the first part encouraged the sale of the second part of *The Rights of Man* (published on 17 February 1792, one year after the first), which sold in all between 200,000 and 500,000 copies.[82]

In February or March 1793 Wordsworth embarked on a political tract, *A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*. A number of critics and biographers have discussed the influence of well-known political writings on Wordsworth's *Letter*. James Chandler discusses it as one of the replies to Burke's *Reflections*.[83] Although not remarked upon by Chandler or others, Wordsworth's attack on the ill-effects of the existing system of education seems to draw upon Burke's famous charge: 'learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude':[84]

> . . . we are taught from infancy that we were born in a state of inferiority to our oppressors, that they were sent into the world to scourge and we to be scourged. Accordingly we see the bulk of mankind actuated by these fatal prejudices, even more ready to lay themselves under the feet of *the great*, than the great are to trample upon them. (*Pr. W.* I. 36)

Wordsworth's friendship with the London dissenters like Nicholson and Johnson both in spring 1791 and in spring 1793, I think, was a decisive factor not only in his disapproval of Burke but also in his condemnation of the existing system of education, which instructed the lower-middle and lower classes to be obedient to the ruling classes.

W. J. B. Owen and J. W. Smyser argue that Wordsworth was deeply under the influence of Paine, since he echoed some passages of *The Rights of Man* in his *Letter*.[85] Besides the verbal parallels between Wordsworth and Paine, I would like to suggest the similarity between Wordsworth's views of

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[82] See Richardson, pp. 116, 45.

[83] See James Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 10-25 (hereafter referred to as 'Chandler').

[84] Burke, *Reflections*, p. 173.

[85] *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W.J.B.Owen and J.W.Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), I. 23-4, 50-66 (hereafter referred to as *Pr. W.*). In their 'Introduction' Owen and Smyser argue that Rousseau and Paine appear to have influenced the *Letter* because 'the verbal parallels between their writings and Wordsworth's are significantly numerous and often very close'(23).

public education and Paine's. Paine devotes much space in the second part of *The Rights of Man* to discussing the public education of the poor as an essential preparation for a more thoroughgoing reform of society. Wordsworth also insists on the reform of economic and intellectual inequalities by means of education:

> It is the province of education to rectify the erroneous notions which a habit of oppression, and even of resistance, may have created, and to soften this ferocity of character proceeding from a necessary suspension of the mild and social virtues; it belongs to her to create a race of men who, truly free, will look upon their fathers as only enfranchised. (*Pr. W.* I. 34)

Having experienced a 'prodigious annihilation' of his '[v]irtues, talents, and acquirements', Wordsworth now demonstrates himself as the 'advocate of republicanism', who believes that the establishment of the system of public education would enable 'truly free' men of real '[v]irtues, talents, and acquirements' to universally disseminate 'a moderate portion of useful knowledge'(*Pr. W.* I. 38-9). Public education would help those called by Burke a 'swinish multitude'[86] find a means to demonstrate their intellectual abilities and moral virtue.

The influence of Godwin's *Political Justice* (published on 14 February 1793 by George Robinson) is denied by Owen, Smyser, and Moorman,[87] though I think Wordsworth's *Letter* may have been influenced by Godwin as well as by Paine. For instance, in stating that he is 'so strongly impressed with the baleful influence of aristocracy and nobility upon human happiness and virtue'(*Pr. W.* I. 46), Wordsworth seems to echo the subtitle of *Political Justice* ('its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness'). This is, in fact, a common phrase, but, as Hazlitt later recollected, *Political Justice* was such a powerful 'blow' to 'the philosophical mind of the country' as to make Godwin 'a sun in the firmament of reputation'.[88] Wordsworth certainly possessed 'the philosophical mind', which agreed with Godwin's ideals of

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[86] Burke, *Reflections*, p. 173.

[87] *Pr. W.* I. 23-4. They argue that 'some of Godwin's most important tenets are in direct contradiction to the very heart of Wordsworth's *Letter*', and conclude, 'Wherever similarities occur between Wordsworth's *Letter* and Godwin's *Political Justice*, it is possible to find a common source, usually Paine'. See also Moorman, p. 255. She suggests that although it is impossible to say when Wordsworth first read *Political Justice*, the *Letter* shows no trace of Godwin's doctrines.

[88] Hazlitt, XI, p. 16.

the progress of human improvement by means of 'universal benevolence'.[89] It was still three years ahead, on 27 February 1795, that Wordsworth first met Godwin.[90] However, Joseph Johnson was well-placed to introduce Wordsworth to radical circles which were receptive to Godwin's ideals. Wordsworth also resumed his friendship with Samuel Nicholson and some dissenting radicals whom he had met two years previously. As Marshall points out, during its sixteen months' composition the content of *Political Justice* had been known to a considerable number of radicals.[91] It is, therefore, possible and likely that by the composition of his *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* Wordsworth knew some of Godwin's arguments through his acquaintances with Johnson, Nicholson, and other prominent rational reformists.

However, there are more differences than similarities between Wordsworth's *Letter* and *Political Justice*. Wordsworth insists on the establishment of the system of public education of all social classes, while Godwin shows an entirely negative view about any system of public education. To fulfil his scheme for a rational reform, Godwin calls upon an intellectual élite to 'give to the people guides and instructors'.[92] He proudly points out the advantages of his ideal society:

> With what delight must every well informed friend of mankind look forward to the auspicious period, the dissolution of political government, of that brute engine, which has been the only perennial cause of the vices of mankind, and which, as has abundantly appeared in the progress of the present work, has mischiefs of various sorts incorporated with its substance, and no otherwise to be removed than by its utter annihilation! [93]

Whereas Wordsworth suggests the necessity of equality to like-minded men of all social classes, Godwin addresses his rational philosophy to only a limited number of 'well informed' people. Godwin, however, seems to notice that even an intellectual élite, educated at state schools, private

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[89] Hazlitt, XI, pp. 16, 19-20.

[90] See Reed, p. 164.

[91] Peter H. Marshall, *William Godwin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 83 (hereafter referred to as 'Marshall').

[92] William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, 2 vols (London, 1793), I, 69 (hereafter referred to as *Political Justice*).

[93] Godwin, *Political Justice*, II, 578-9. Wordsworth later echoed 'what delight' in The 1805 *Prelude*, X, 818 in attacking Godwinian reason.

schools, universities, and Sunday schools, has already been indoctrinated by the government. Furthermore, among the artisan leaders of political societies Godwin could not find sufficiently 'well informed' instructors. Consequently, *Political Justice* concludes without suggesting any practical means of reform. There is no way of knowing whether or to what extent Wordsworth's *Letter* was influenced by *Political Justice* either directly or through some link figures. However, Wordsworth's discussion of public education seems to show his disapproval of Godwin's ideals of education in *Political Justice.*

In February 1792 Johnson was so cautious about the repressive policies of the government as to refuse to publish the second part of Paine's *Rights of Man.* In early April 1793 he probably suggested to Wordsworth that the publication of *A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* might expose both of them to prosecution. Wordsworth's voice as an 'advocate of republicanism'(*Pr. W.* I. 38) was left unheard by the public, though known assuredly to Johnson, Nicholson, Losh, and possibly to a considerable number of rational reformists.[94] When Wordsworth became of age for admission to Anglican orders on 7 April 1793, he may have already decided to unveil an 'act of disobedience'(The 1805 *Prelude,* VI, 40) towards his relatives. By the conclusion of his second residence in London in July 1793 Wordsworth was determined to devote himself to the welfare of all social classes in Britain, though having not yet found a means to demonstrate his ideals.

In late July 1793 Wordsworth left London and accompanied his Hawkshead school-fellow of inherited wealth William Calvert to the West Country. Until his return to London in February 1795 Wordsworth had devoted much time to literary activities, such as the revision of *An Evening Walk* (spring 1793 - May 1794), the composition of *A Night on Salisbury Plain* (*c.* August or September 1793 - May 1794), and a scheme for a monthly miscellany, entitled *The Philanthropist* (May - November 1794). None of these literary works was presented to the public, though, I think, they were deserving recognition as Wordsworth's experiments in giving literary voice to his political, social, and philosophical views. They also reflect the

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[94] See Roe, *Radical Years,* p. 121. Roe points out that Wordsworth's position in his *Letter* resembled Losh's in his political activities of spring 1793. When Losh and George Tierney drafted the petition from the Friends of the People, Wordsworth most likely became one of the petitioners. The petition was presented to the Commons by Charles Grey on 6 May, though later destroyed.

development of Wordsworth's ideals of the progress of human improvement through the enlightenment of all social classes.

The revision of *An Evening Walk* began soon after the publication of it in late January 1793.[95] Paul Sheats asserts that the lines added in 1794 show 'moral and emotional significance'.[96] James Averill suggests that in the revised version Wordsworth aims to explore not only 'social' and 'ethical' but also 'religious issues'.[97] Furthermore, Averill refers to the following passage as the first example of Wordsworth's pantheism:

> A heart that vibrates evermore, awake
> To feeling for all forms that Life can take,
> That wider still its sympathy extends,
> And sees not any line where being ends;
> Sees sense, through Nature's rudest forms betrayed,
> Tremble obscure in fountain, rock, and shade;
> And while a secret power those forms endears
> Their social accents never vainly hears.
> (1794 *Evening Walk*, 125 - 132)

Averill asserts that the 'feeling for all forms that Life can take' prefigures not only *Tintern Abbey*'s pantheistic lines but also '*The Prelude*'s dictum that love of Nature leads to love of Mankind',[98] though I think this might be to anticipate a little too much. The description of 'Life'(126), I believe, suggests that Wordsworth is reconsidering what he failed to show in the published version of *An Evening Walk*, namely the relationship between the human mind and natural phenomena, and the social value of it.

There is another and more marked example of the correspondence between Nature and man in the passage concerning the female beggar and her dying children:

> Oh! when the whirling drifts her path assail,
> And like a torrent roars the mountain gale!
> - Perhaps she knows that wretched mother's pain
> Whose fate - oh grant, kind Heaven, my fears in vain!
> Poor Wanderer, when from forest, brook, and dell,
> Long sounding groans the coming storm foretell,
> Thy memory in those groans shall live and cast

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[95] See *Cornell EW*, 12.
[96] Paul D. Sheats, *The Making of Wordsworth's Poetry, 1785-1819* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 102.
[97] See *Cornell EW*, 13.
[98] *Cornell EW*, 14-5.

Fresh horror o'er wide Stanemoor's wintry waste.
(1794 *Evening Walk*, 506 - 513)

Natural phenomena exemplifies the mother's fear of her children's death. The mother is doing 'all she can do for her children against bitter odds', and particularly against the 'ruthless Tempest' and its 'deadliest dart'(524):

> . . . to baffle the rentless Storm,
> She tries each fond device Despair can form;
> Beneath her stiffened coats, to shield them strives,
> With love whose providence in death survives.
> (1794 *Evening Walk*, 530 - 533)

What she tries to protect her children from are not so much natural disasters but the miseries and distresses which derive directly from social and economic inequalities. The mother's struggle, however, ends in vain:

> When morning breaks I see the [ ] swain,
> Sole moving shape in all that boundless plain,
> Start at her stedfast form by horror deck'd,
> Dead, and as if in act to move, erect.
> (1794 *Evening Walk*, 534 - 537)

The description of the mother's hopeless but persevering struggle demonstrates the inner grandeur of human nature rather than the miseries and distresses of the victim of society. The revised version of *An Evening Walk*, I think, convinced Wordsworth of his method of giving poetic voice to the philosophical and spiritual dimensions of the relationship between natural phenomena and the human mind.

Much of the revised part of *An Evening Walk* was completed presumably while Wordsworth and Dorothy stayed at Windy Brow in early April - mid May 1794. At this time he also worked on a poem, which he had begun soon after the tour with William Calvert through Salisbury Plain in the previous summer. By their departure from Windy Brow Wordsworth had already completed *A Night on Salisbury Plain* and Dorothy may have made the fair copy of it.[99] *A Night on Salisbury Plain*, therefore, has parallels with the revised version of *An Evening Walk*. Stephen Gill regards *A Night on Salisbury Plain* as more radical, for it reflects more

[99] See William Wordsworth, *The Salisbury Plain Poems*, ed. Stephen Gill (Cornell Wordsworth Series, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 6 (hereafter referred to as *Cornell SP*).

explicitly 'Wordsworth's natural response to intense social, political, and personal pressure'.[100] Expressing 'condemnation of tyranny and social injustice' with 'no hesitation, no allowance for the variety of life', *A Night on Salisbury Plain*, Gill says, 'must command our sympathy'.[101] Furthermore, as Gill asserts, Wordsworth aimed to 'make the reader feel through the medium of poetry' what they could not feel in political pamphlets like Godwin's and Paine's, namely 'the truth about society and its treatment of the common man'.[102] What did Wordsworth try to demonstrate as 'the truth about society'? Who did he describe as 'the common man'? What did he intend to make the reader feel? These questions are not fully discussed by Gill. I would like to develop Gill's argument by considering some answers to these questions.

A Night on Salisbury Plain begins with a realistic account of a discharged soldier, who is now a 'traveller' on 'Sarum's plain'(38). He is 'strong to suffer, and his mind /Encounters all his evils unsubdued'(10-11), but he 'with a sigh /Measure[s] each painful step'(38-9). His misery reflects Wordsworth's protest against the indifference of the government to soldiers, and particularly against inadequate compensation for their services.[103] Stonehenge is more than the superstitious 'dead house of the plain'(126), for it seems to symbolize the traveller's hopelessness and his isolation from society. Without 'Love'(30), 'Friendship'(30), and 'social life'(33), the traveller 'scarce [can] any trace of man descry'(43). The description of the traveller's solitude suggests that Wordsworth tries to lead the reader to go beyond contemporary social problems into the inner dimensions of the traveller.

The subsequent lines deal with another victim of society, a 'female wanderer' (a war widow who came back alone from America after the death of her husband and children).[104] Having found the other solitary figure on the plain, the traveller addresses 'low words of chearing sound'(158) to her. Answering his kindness, the female wanderer begins to tell him the story of her miseries '[w]ith sober sympathy and tranquil mind'(202). As Z. S. Fink

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[100] Stephen Gill, 'The Original Salisbury Plain', in *Bicentenary Wordsworth Studies in Memory of John Alban Finch*, ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp. 142-179; p. 146.

[101] Gill, 'The Original Salisbury Plain', p. 146.

[102] Gill, 'The Original Salisbury Plain', p. 147.

[103] See Clive Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars: 1793-1815* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 51. Emsley suggests that between 1793 and 1796 40,000 soldiers were discharged without adequate compensation.

[104] See *A Night on Salisbury Plain*, 138 and stanzas 33-44.

asserts, her story is concerned with contemporary social problems like the local oppression of peasants and the ill-effects of the American War.[105] However, even though described by means of abstractions and personifications, the miseries of the female wanderer, if published, may well have gone further than political tracts by making contemporary readers feel pity for the victims of society.

Describing the feelings of the female wanderer after the death of her husband and children, Wordsworth shows a growing insight into the mind. Mary Jacobus states that the 'mighty gulf of separation'(370), which the female wanderer feels on her homeward voyage from America, is 'the gulf between living and no longer having a reason to live', since she 'loses her humanity through losing those she loves'.[106] The traveller is an 'earthly friend'(392) whose kindness and sympathy encourage her to determine to leave 'the tomb'(393) for society. The description of the dawn suggests regained hope:

> The city's distant spires ascend
> Like flames which far and wide the west illume,
> Scattering from out the sky the rear of night's thin gloom.
> Along the fiery east the Sun, a show
> More gorgeous still! pursued his proud career.
> (*A Night on Salisbury Plain*, 394 - 398)

All that scared the female wanderer overnight - the storm, darkness, and loneliness of the plain - has gone. Furthermore, the traveller is affected not only by this gorgeous scenery but also by the woman's tale:

> . . . human sufferings and that tale of woe
> Had dimmed the traveller's eye with Pity's tear,
> And in the youthful mourner's doom severe
> He half forgot the terrors of the night,
> Striving with counsel sweet her soul to chear,
> Her soul for ever widowed of delight.
> He too had withered young in sorrow's deadly blight.
> (*A Night on Salisbury Plain*, 399 - 405)

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[105] See Z. S. Fink, *The Early Wordsworthian Milieu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 88-9, 134-5. Fink suggests that when describing the 'miserable hour'(261) following the 'Oppression'(257) of the female vagrant's father, Wordsworth probably thought of the story of local oppression in which an old couple were tyrannized because they would not sell a field to a local landowner.

[106] Mary Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Lyrical Ballads, 1798* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 149-50 (hereafter referred to as 'Jacobus').

The traveller feels 'Pity' not only for her 'tale of woe' but also for all 'human sufferings'. Referring to this passage, Jacobus suggests that the only refuge of the poor lies in 'mutual compassion', since consolations and comforts are few in society: although the 'terror of the night' has gone, the traveller is still afflicted by 'sorrow's deadly blight', and the female wanderer too remains 'widowed' - homeless and hopeless.[107] Yet their mutual compassion is, I think, strong enough to convince the reader that they are not as lonely as they were.

'Friendship'(30) encourages the traveller and the female wanderer to resume their 'social life'(33):

> . . . now from a hill summit down they look
> Where through a narrow valley's pleasant scene
> A wreath of vapour tracked a winding brook
> Babbling through groves and lawns and meads of green.
> A smoking cottage peeped the trees between,
> The woods resound the linnet's amorous lays,
> And melancholy lowings intervene
> Of scattered herds that in the meadows graze,
> While through the furrowed grass the merry milkmaid strays.
> (*A Night on Salisbury Plain*, 406 - 414)

Contemporary readers may have seen the poor helping the poor, though noticing that social and economic oppression would work to frustrate this mutual support. In fact, the narrator suggests

> How weak the solace such fond thoughts afford,
> When with untimely stroke the virtuous bleed.
> (*A Night on Salisbury Plain*, 505 - 506)

The subsequent lines, however, hint at a means to deal with the 'untimely stroke':

> . . . whence but from the labours of the sage
> Can poor benighted mortals gain the meed
> Of happiness and virtue, how assuage
> But by his gentle words their self-consuming rage?
> (*A Night on Salisbury Plain*, 510 - 513)

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[107] Jacobus, pp. 145, 152.

Roe suggests that in this passage Wordsworth described Godwin as the 'sage' whose 'gentle words' of *Political Justice* would help him form a scheme for a monthly miscellany to enable 'poor benighted mortals' to gain 'happiness and virtue'.[108] I would rather suggest that Wordsworth may have recollected his abandoned *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff,* which aimed to demonstrate 'the baleful influence of aristocracy and nobility upon human happiness and virtue'(*Pr. W.* I. 46). Wordsworth seems to have intended to be a 'sage' whose 'gentle words' of poetry would encourage the poor to pursue 'happiness and virtue'.

Gill suggests that in *A Night on Salisbury Plain* Wordsworth expressed 'condemnation of tyranny and social injustice' with 'no hesitation, no allowance for the variety of life'.[109] In doing so, Wordsworth, as Gill says, aimed to 'make the reader feel through the medium of poetry' what they could not feel in political pamphlets like Godwin's and Paine's, namely 'the truth about society and its treatment of the common man'.[110] I agree with Gill that the former forty-seven stanzas concerning the traveller and the female wanderer may well have called the attention of contemporary readers to the baleful influence of the existing system of social and economic inequalities on the poor. The subsequent part (stanzas 48-61), on the other hand, seems to me to have drawn readers' attention from 'the truth about society' to a somewhat unrealistic sphere like the 'earth of Superstition's reign'(548). The concluding stanza (541-9) is for Gill Wordsworth's 'prophetic voice which speaks of another world to which man could aspire and to which the artist as prophet must point, and which eventually includes the whole world in its apocalyptic vision'.[111] The 'apocalyptic vision', I think, reflects Wordsworth's notion of the feebleness of any protest he could make. *A Night on Salisbury Plain,* if published, may well have made contemporary readers feel pity for the ill-treatment of the poor. However, while the revised version of *An Evening Walk* concludes with the dignity of the dead mother, the 'apocalyptic vision' in the concluding stanza of *A Night on Salisbury Plain* may not have shown readers the inner grandeur of human nature. Furthermore, unlike political pamphlets and periodicals, the 'prophetic voice' seems not to have encouraged contemporary readers to pursue 'happiness and virtue'(512). *A Night on Salisbury Plain,* I think, forced Wordsworth to reconsider whether poetry would be an effective

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[108] Roe, *Radical Years,* p. 176.
[109] Gill, 'The Original Salisbury Plain', p. 146.
[110] Gill, 'The Original Salisbury Plain', p. 147.
[111] *Cornell SP,* 6.

means to enable and encourage all social classes to pursue 'happiness and virtue'(512).

On 11 May 1794 while completing *A Night on Salisbury Plain* and revising *An Evening Walk*, Wordsworth heard from William Mathews about another means to express his political, social, and philosophical ideals, namely a periodical. On his arrival at Whitehaven on 23 May Wordsworth wrote to Mathews and asked him more about 'the possibility of setting on foot a monthly miscellany'(*EY*, 118). 'Of each others political sentiments we ought not to be ignorant', he said, and demonstrated his condemnation of repressive legislation:

> . . . here at the very threshold I solemnly affirm that in no writings of mine will I ever admit of any sentiment which can have the least tendency to induce my readers to suppose that the doctrines which are now enforced by banishment, imprisonment, &c, &c, are other than pregnant with every species of misery. (*EY*, 119)

Although living far apart from the centre of the reform movement, Wordsworth knew much about the 'banishment' of Joseph Gerrald, Thomas Muir, Thomas Fysshe Palmer, Maurice Margarot, and William Skirving in 1793-4. His 'political sentiments' were certainly stimulated by the latest 'imprisonment' of the twelve radical leaders, who had been arrested for High Treason on 12 May. Mathews's letter led Wordsworth to express his 'political sentiments', which he had abandoned with his *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*. Wordsworth's letter of 23 May suggests that he was already determined to contribute demonstrably to the movement for reform and peace with France. He expected that the projected monthly miscellany would be a more practical and effective means than poetic works.

In the subsequent passage Wordsworth said

> You know perhaps already that I am of that odious class of men called democrats, and of that class I shall for ever continue. In a work like that of which we are speaking, it will be impossible (and indeed it would render our publication worthless were we to attempt it,) not to inculcate principles of government and forms of social order of one kind or another. (*EY*, 119)

In the projected miscellany Wordsworth, as one of the 'odious class of men called democrats', intended to attack 'the baleful influence of aristocracy and

nobility upon human happiness and virtue' as firmly as he had formerly done as an 'advocate of republicanism' in his unpublished *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*.[112]

Both Wordsworth and Mathews were too poor to achieve any practical steps at this time,[113] but Wordsworth discussed their scheme in more detail. He asked Mathews, 'What class of readers ought we to aim at procuring; in what do we, each of us, suppose ourselves the most able either to entertain or instruct?'(*EY*, 119) The answer to the first question was certainly 'democrats'(*EY*, 119). Wordsworth also thought that the 'dissenters' would receive their work 'with pleasure'(*EY*, 126). Concerning the second question he made some suggestions:

> Besides essays on morals and politics I think I could communicate critical remarks upon poetry, &c, &c, upon the arts of painting, gardening, and other subjects of amusement. But I should principally wish our attention to be fixed upon life and manners, and to make our publication a vehicle of sound and exalted Morality. (*EY*, 119)

Even at the beginning of the scheme their projected journal was intended for a particular purpose, namely the development of democrats' political, moral, and aesthetic views.

In his next letter to Mathews of 8 June 1794 Wordsworth went into details about 'sound and exalted Morality'. He began this letter with an attack upon the system of hierarchy:

> I disapprove of monarchical and aristocratical governments, however modified. Hereditary distinctions and privileged orders of every species I think must necessarily counteract the progress of human improvement . . . (*EY*, 123)

Saying, 'hence it follows that I am not amongst the admirers of the British constitution', Wordsworth most likely intended to demonstrate himself as an admirer of *Political Justice*, who 'recoil[ed] from the bare idea of a revolution' and aimed at 'the progress of human improvement'(*EY*, 123-4). 'There is a further duty incumbent upon every enlightened friend of mankind', he said,

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[112] *Pr. W.* I, 46, 38.

[113] For their financial difficulty, see *EY*, 115, 118.

and explained how he would 'diffuse by every method a knowledge of those rules of political justice'(*EY*, 124). *"The Philanthropist a monthly Miscellany"*, which was presumably named after Godwin's discussion of 'philanthropy' in *Political Justice*,[114] was to include 'everything that [could] instruct and amuse mankind'(*EY*, 125). Godwin asserted in *Political Justice* that the 'true instruments for changing the opinions of men' were 'argument and persuasion' and the 'best security for an advantageous issue' was 'free and unrestricted discussion'.[115] By providing the reader with materials of thinking, Wordsworth expected *The Philanthropist* to achieve Godwin's aim to 'establish freedom with tranquillity' and to encourage 'the progress of human improvement'(*EY*, 123-4). He was so convinced of the practicability of *The Philanthropist* as to ask his co-editors, Mathews and Burleigh,[116] to compose 'at least two numbers' which would be 'circulated in manuscript' among his friends 'in this part of the world as specimens of the intended work', and to 'draw up a prospectus' of their 'object and plan'(*EY*, 127-8).

On 10 June 1794 while Wordsworth was considering the details of *The Philanthropist*, the Great Terror began in Paris. On 28 July the Great Terror concluded with Robespierre's execution. The detailed account of the French Revolution in Book X of the 1805 *Prelude* suggests that Wordsworth may have examined the Great Terror with a journalist's eye. Since the beginning of October Wordsworth had been looking after William Calvert's younger brother Raisley in the Lake District. He most likely paid attention to the Treason Trials and presumably prepared an essay on it, though there is no existing letter or document written from June to October 1794 concerning *The Philanthropist*. It was on 7 November that Wordsworth wrote to Mathews about *The Philanthropist*. His principal aim was to say

> The more nearly we approached the time fixed for action, the more strongly was I persuaded that we should decline the field. (*EY*, 134)

No particular reason was mentioned in this letter. Wordsworth still hoped to go into journalism and asked Mathews to introduce him to 'an opposition

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[114] For Godwin's influence on the theory and the title of Wordsworth's journal, see Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 184. Roe suggests that Wordsworth was echoing Godwin almost word for word, in a passage from *Political Justice*: 'The revolutions of states, which a philanthropist would desire to witness, or in which he would willingly co-operate, consist principally in a change of sentiments and dispositions in the members of those states'(*Political Justice*, I, 202).

[115] Godwin, *Political Justice*, I, 202.

[116] Shaver, *EY*, 135n., suggests that 'the young man' was probably Mr. Burleigh, whose name was to be later mentioned in Wordsworth's letter to Mathews of 7 November 1794.

paper'(*EY*, 135). However, he focused more on poetry, for he said, 'This is a country for poetry'(*EY*, 136), and talked about *A Night on Salisbury Plain*. His latest composition, however, did not satisfy him, for, dealing with 'no character at all'(*EY*, 136), it would not be distinguished from contemporary poems concerning the miseries of society. Wordsworth seems to have been at a loss as to which would be a suited method to express his opinions, poetry or periodicals.

On 24 December 1794 Wordsworth asked Mathews once again to look for some employment for him, but he had become less confident of his ability as a political journalist:

> . . . I have neither strength of memory, quickness of penmanship, nor rapidity of composition, to enable me to report any part of the parliamentary debates. (*EY*, 137)

Although regarding it as difficult to report 'the parliamentary debates', Wordsworth still hoped to contribute 'an essay upon general politics', which he had defined in his letter of 8 June as 'a perspicuous statement of the most important occurrences, not overburthened with trite reflections yet accompanied with such remarks as may forcibly illustrate the tendency of particular doctrines of government'.[117]

Wordsworth devoted much space in his letter to a perceptive account of the most important recent occurrence, namely 'the acquittal of the prisoners' who had been arrested for High Treason earlier that year:

> The late occurrences in every point of view are interesting to humanity. They will abate the insolence and presumption of the aristocracy by shewing it that neither the violence, nor the art, of power can crush even an unfriended individual, though engaged in the propagation of doctrines confessedly unpalatable to privilege; and they will force upon the most prejudiced this conclusion that there is some reason in the language of reformers. Furthermore, they will convince bigotted enemies to our present constitution that it contains parts upon which too high a value cannot be set. To every class of men occupied in the correction of abuses it must be an animating reflection that their exertions, so long as they are temperate will be countenanced and protected by the good sense of the country. (*EY*, 137)

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[117] *EY*, 138, 125.

The passage demonstrates not 'the tendency of particular doctrines of government'(*EY*, 125) but the ill-effects of the government policies on 'humanity'. In this sense, Wordsworth's report of the acquittal of the prisoners resembles *A Night on Salisbury Plain*, which aims to demonstrate a way in which 'an unfriended individual' could overcome social and political pressure. It also shows a parallel with the revised version of *An Evening Walk*, which concludes by describing the dignity of the dead mother who did all she could do for her children against the ill-treatment of society. At this time Wordsworth may have been convinced that he could contribute to the reform movement by demonstrating 'the good sense of the country' to 'every class of men occupied in the correction of abuses'. However, he had not yet decided which could be a suited means to do so, literary works or political writings.

2. 4. Godwinian Rationalism: 27 February - April 1795

Having looked after Raisley Calvert until his death in early January 1795, Wordsworth at last came back to London in late February. Johnston suggests that Wordsworth may have stayed at William Mathews's chambers at the Middle Temple 'eagerly checking out the journalism opportunities'.[118] However, his letter to Mathews of 24 December 1794 suggests that Wordsworth may have felt confident neither of his ability as a journalist nor of his poetic talents. Intending to find a means to express his social, political, and philosophical opinions, he was anxious to contact well-known intellectual figures, in particular Godwin, who was then 'a sun in the firmament of reputation' for his support for the twelve radical leaders as well as for his *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams*.[119] As Hazlitt recollected, in the mid 1790s 'no one was more talked of, more looked up to, more sought after, and wherever liberty, truth, justice was the theme, [Godwin's] name was not far off'.[120] Staying with Mathews, Wordsworth was, I think, eagerly looking for a link with the circle of Godwin among those living nearby. In the 1805 *Prelude* the Inns of Court are called the 'privileged regions and inviolate, /Where from their airy lodges studious lawyers /Look out on waters, walks, and gardens green'.[121] However, the fact was

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[118] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, pp. 428-30.
[119] Hazlitt, XI, p. 16. Wu, p. 66, suggests that Wordsworth had read *Political Justice* by June 1794 and *Caleb Williams* by February 1795.
[120] Hazlitt, XI, p. 16.
[121] The 1805 *Prelude*, VII, 202-4.

that in February 1795 he saw Mathews, John Tweddell (who was studying law at the Middle Temple), and some other 'studious lawyers' going out of their 'airy lodges' into radical circles receptive to Godwin's ideals of 'liberty', 'truth', and 'justice'.

It was on 27 February 1795 at William Frend's lodgings in Buckingham Street that Wordsworth at last had the honour of introducing himself to the author of *Political Justice*, *Caleb Williams*, and *Cursory Strictures*. Frend had another seven guests, who were all leading figures of the reform movement: Thomas Holcroft, George Dyer, Jonathan Raine, Thomas Edwards, Godfrey Higgins, James Losh, and John Tweddell. Those who escorted Wordsworth to Frend's lodgings were the young active radicals, Tweddell and Losh.[122] As a contemporary at Cambridge, Tweddell knew that in July 1790 Wordsworth had visited Paris to celebrate the first anniversary of the Revolution. Losh had spent much time with Wordsworth in Paris in November 1792 and most likely read *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*. Some information about the abandoned *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* and the *Philanthropist* scheme may have been known to Tweddell and Losh. To introduce Wordsworth to the circle of leading reformists, Tweddell and Losh may well have intended to emphasize his enthusiasm for a Godwinian rational reform of society.

Wordsworth most certainly considered how he could create a good impression on the leading rational thinkers. His *Philanthropist* scheme should be known to Godwin as a project based on *Political Justice*. His poetic publications, *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, should be mentioned to suggest his connection with one of the most well-known dissenting publishers Joseph Johnson. *Descriptive Sketches* would remind Holcroft that in the *Monthly Review* (XII, October 1793) he had defined Wordsworth as one of those who were 'so delighted with their own thoughts that they [could not] forbear from putting them into rhyme, to examine those thoughts until they [understood] them'.[123] Wordsworth could show the development of his political, social, and moral views to Holcroft by talking about the revised version of *An Evening Walk* and *A Night on Salisbury Plain*.

Preparing himself for the Frend's meeting, Wordsworth most likely recollected his experience at Samuel Nicholson's Sunday dinners and at the dissenters' meetings in spring 1791 and spring 1793. He presumably reconsidered Godwin's insistence in *Political Justice* that the 'true

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[122] See Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 191.

[123] The *Monthly Review*, 12 (October 1793), 216-8; *Cornell DS*, 300-1.

instruments for changing the opinions of men' were 'argument and persuasion' and the 'best security for an advantageous issue' was 'free and unrestricted discussion'.[124] It was readily explicable for Wordsworth that the most part of the meeting would be devoted to exchanging opinions in a 'free and unrestricted' way. As the most likely subject he assuredly expected the Treason Trials, which had concluded in December 1794 with the acquittal of the twelve radical leaders. While discussing *The Philanthropist* in his letters to Mathews, Wordsworth had devoted some space to demonstrating his opinions on the Treason Trials. By the meeting of 27 February 1795 Wordsworth may have constructed his opinions on the Treason Trials and other legislative repression by remembering his abandoned *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* and the *Philanthropist* scheme. Some weeks previously, in January 1795, one of the survivors of High Treason, John Thelwall, published his *Poems Written in Close Confinement in the Tower and Newgate*. Having tried to demonstrate his political views in the revised version of *An Evening Walk* and *A Night on Salisbury Plain*, Wordsworth most likely hoped to know how Thelwall expressed his political opinions in poetic terms. Wordsworth seems to have intended to talk with those of both political and literary fame like Godwin and Holcroft about how he could acquire fully interconnected views of politics and philosophy and how he could express them in literary terms.

The Frend's meeting was, in fact, a favourable occasion to discuss politics and literature. Roe points out the connection between the Frend's meeting of 27 February 1795 and Daniel Isaac Eaton's periodical, entitled *The Philanthropist*. He asserts, 'the company Wordsworth joined on 27 February 1795 provides a likely group of contributors and editors for the *Philanthropist* as published', since '[a]ll were liberal intellectuals who supported reform and an end to the war, and at least six - Godwin, Holcroft, Losh, Wordsworth, Frend, and Dyer - had expressed their opinions in journals, pamphlets, and petitions'.[125] Johnston agrees with Roe that all the young men at the meeting had 'a lively interest in periodical publications' and the four older men (Frend, Godwin, Holcroft, and Dyer) were 'all highly experienced and successful polemicists in the pamphlet wars of the day'.[126] It is, in fact, intriguing that the first number of Eaton's *Philanthropist* appeared on 16 March 1795, some two weeks after the Frend's meeting of 27

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[124] Godwin, *Political Justice*, I, 202.
[125] Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 276.
[126] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 436.

February. However, with no firm evidence or record, even Roe's and Johnston's persuasive arguments consist chiefly of speculation, and it is not my aim to speculate further about Wordsworth's involvement in Eaton's *Philanthropist*. I would rather suggest that at the Frend's meeting Wordsworth presumably discussed political publications, and possibly referred to his abandoned scheme for *The Philanthropist*.

By his arrival in London in late February 1795 Wordsworth may have already regarded himself as less suited to journalism. It was possible for him to contribute his poems or 'critical remarks upon poetry'(*EY*, 119) to periodicals. However, as he admitted in his letter of 24 December 1794, he did not have such 'rapidity of composition' as to compose poems concerning the latest political event (*EY*, 137). In addition, as the revised version of *An Evening Walk* and *A Night on Salisbury Plain* suggest, he focused on less suited subjects for political publication, namely the ill-effects of the existing systems on the human mind. What Wordsworth hoped to hear from Frend and his guests was, I think, a philosophical analysis of the existing systems, from which he could collect some ideas for his future literary works.

It was, I believe, Wordsworth's philosophical inquiry rather than his political enthusiasm that led Godwin to arrange a meeting with him on the very next day after the Frend's meeting. Before his departure from London in late August 1795 Wordsworth had seen Godwin nine times.[127] In 1826 Godwin recollected his 'most powerful topic' of this period. 'I had the honour', he said, 'in the talk of one evening, to convert Wordsworth from the doctrine of self-love to that of benevolence'.[128] Robert Woof suggests that it must have been one of the nine meetings between February and August 1795.[129] Roe says that it must have been after 10 March, when Wordsworth may have followed Godwin to the meeting of the philosophical discussion club called the Philomatheans, and discussed 'soldier v. priest', 'marriage', 'Christian morality', 'self love', and 'capital punishment'.[130]

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[127] See Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 194.

[128] Quoted from Robert Woof, *The Wordsworth Circle* (Grasmere: 1979), p. 11.

[129] Woof, *The Wordsworth Circle*, p. 11.

[130] See Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 195. Roe calls attention to the fact that at least four of Wordsworth's recorded meetings with Godwin took place on a Tuesday [10 Mar. 31 Mar, 14 July, 18 August]. This was also the day on which the Philomathean Society met for debates and discussion. For more about the Philomatheans, see St Clair, pp. 91-2. According to St Clair, Major Jardine suggested the establishment of a discussion club of 'philosophic minds in search of truth'. The members consisted of Godwin, Holcroft, Nicholson, Priestley, Machintosh, the Wedgwood brothers, Fox, and Sheridan. See also Roe, *Radical Years*, pp. 169, 195, 225. The Philomatheans consisted of twenty-one members and met on alternate Tuesdays, and Roe suggests that Wordsworth, Mathews, and Montagu attended at least one of the Tuesday meetings of the Philomatheans.

Whenever it was, their discussion of 'self love', I think, may not have concluded in disagreement, for the *Philanthropist* scheme suggests that Wordsworth approved of Godwin's doctrine of benevolence. Moreover, *A Night on Salisbury Plain* shows two examples of 'self love' as the cause of isolation from society; one is the discharged soldier's followed by the loss of 'Love', 'Friendship', and 'social life'(30, 33), and the other is the female wanderer's caused by the death of her husband and children. However, there is a marked difference between Godwin's treatment of private considerations like 'Love' and 'Friendship' and Wordsworth's. In *Political Justice* Godwin treated private considerations as an impediment to 'philanthropy', 'the general good' and the intellectual 'field of thought'.[131] Wordsworth, on the contrary, concluded the revised version of *An Evening Walk* by demonstrating the dignity of the affectionate mother. In *A Night on Salisbury Plain* he described the 'Friendship' of the traveller and the female beggar as their first step towards 'social life'.[132] It seems less likely that Wordsworth referred to his poems at his meetings with Godwin, but he may have been so fully convinced of the significance of private considerations as to show disagreement with Godwin's rejection of them.

In *Political Justice* Godwin insisted that the 'true instruments for changing the opinions of men' were 'argument and persuasion' and the 'best security for an advantageous issue' was 'free and unrestricted discussion'.[133] However, Godwin's method of discussion was not utterly 'free and unrestricted', for his recollection suggests that he aimed to inculcate his doctrine of benevolence in Wordsworth. There is other evidence to suggest that Godwin did not try out 'argument and persuasion' or 'free and unrestricted discussion' in 'changing the opinions of men'. One of the members of the Philomatheans, John Binns, later recollected Godwin as 'the most diffuse and tiresome' speaker, who had never allowed other members to interrupt him.[134] At the Philomatheans' meetings or his discussions with Godwin, Wordsworth most likely noted that Godwin's 'diffuse', 'tiresome', and somewhat authoritarian indoctrination contradicted the 'free and unrestricted discussion' recommended in *Political Justice*.

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[131] Godwin, *Political Justice*, II, 810.

[132] *A Night on Salisbury Plain*, 30, 33.

[133] Godwin, *Political Justice*, I, 202.

[134] See John Binns, *Recollections of the Life of John Binns* (Philadelphia: 1854), p. 45. Although there was a rule that no member should speak for more than fifteen minutes, Binns said, 'I have no recollection ever to have seen either of [the two fifteen minute glasses] turned when any member, other than Godwin or Holcroft rose to speak'.

In Wordsworth's existing letters and manuscripts there is no reference to his connection with Godwin in February - August 1795. In the 1805 *Prelude* he never mentioned Godwin by name. Roe points out that in Book X of the 1805 *Prelude* Wordsworth described Godwin's 'hair-splitting method of reasoning' as the 'scrupulous and microscopic views'(X, 845).[135] The subsequent passage in Book X shows us how Wordsworth's allegiance to Godwin's rational principles was betrayed:

> Time may come
> When some dramatic story may afford
> Shapes livelier to convey to thee, my friend,
> What then I learned, or think I learned, of truth,
> And the errors into which I was betrayed
> By present objects, and by reasonings false
> From the beginning, inasmuch as drawn
> Out of a heart which had been turned aside
> From nature by external accidents,
> And which was thus confounded more and more,
> Misguiding and misguided.
>
> (The 1805 *Prelude*, X, 878 - 888)

Even without 'livelier' shapes or any reference to Godwin, the brief recollection was, I think, 'dramatic' enough to be understood not only by Coleridge but also by those who had been 'misguided' by *Political Justice*.

The subsequent passage describes how Wordsworth was brought by Godwin into the 'errors':

> Thus I fared,
> Dragging all passions, notions, shapes of faith,
> Like culprits to the bar; suspiciously
> Calling the mind to establish in plain day
> Her titles and her honours; now believing,
> Now disbelieving; endlessly perplexed
> With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground
> Of moral obligation - what the rule
> And what the sanction - till, demanding proof,
> And seeking it in everything, I lost
> All feeling of conviction, and (in fine)
> Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
> Yielded up moral questions in despair
>
> (The 1805 *Prelude*, X, 888 - 900)

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[135] Roe, *Radical Years*, pp. 195-7.

The 1850 *Prelude* more clearly explains Wordsworth's 'despair' as the 'crisis of that strong disease' and 'the soul's last and lowest ebb'(The 1850 *Prelude*, XI, 306-7), though using less lively religious shapes. The passage quoted from the 1805 *Prelude* is referred to by Roe as a manifestation of Wordsworth's 'intellectual crisis' which was caused by 'his realization of the incompatibility between the abstract rationalism of William Godwin's *Political Justice*, and the emotional and spiritual dimensions of human life'.[136] Clancey agrees with Roe in saying, '[p]ossibly Wordsworth was seduced by Godwin into thinking that there was an absolute truth available to the political theorist', and consequently 'a kind of philosophical absolutism' caused his crisis.[137] Roe suggests that the 'change in Wordsworth's estimation of Godwin as a man and thinker' most likely took place some time in April - July 1795.[138] It seems to me that as early as spring 1794 the incompatibility became apparent to Wordsworth while revising *An Evening Walk* and composing *A Night on Salisbury Plain*. Wordsworth's 'crisis', I think, was caused by his disappointment at Godwin's dictatorial method of reasoning rather than his abstract rationalism.

Godwin seems to have admitted the impracticability of his abstract rationalism as early as December 1794, when he began the revision of *Political Justice*.[139] He may have been aware of the 'incompatibility' between 'the abstract rationalism of *Political Justice*' and 'the emotional and spiritual dimensions of human life'[140] through the philosophical discussions, which, I believe, included his nine meetings with Wordsworth in February - August 1795. There is no evidence to discuss Wordsworth's contribution to the revised version of *Political Justice* (published November 1795). However, even as early as spring 1795 Wordsworth may have been able to draw Godwin's attention to the inner dimensions of the human mind, for, as Don Locke says, the second edition of *Political Justice* suggests that 'the hopes of mankind must lie in personal morality, not public politics'.[141]

In April 1795 Wordsworth moved out of No. 15 Chalton Street, Somers Town, and concluded his regular visits to Godwin's lodgings at No.

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136 Roe, *Culture of Dissent*, p. 185.

137 Clancey, p. 160.

138 Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 197.

139 Don Locke, *A fantasy of reason: The life and thought of William Godwin* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 360. Don Locke suggests that the revision of *Political Justice* had occupied Godwin from 24 December 1794 to 10 October 1795 (hereafter referred to as 'Don Locke').

140 Roe, *Culture of Dissent*, p. 185.

141 Don Locke, p. 96.

25. Moving out of Godwin's neighbourhood, Wordsworth seems to have stepped out of Godwin's abstract rationalism and his dictatorial method of reasoning. Moving into Basil Montagu's chambers at Lincoln's Inn, he hoped to elaborate his own principles of 'the progress of human improvement'(*EY*, 123) by encouraging his unfortunate friend to resume his connection with society and to gain happiness with his infant son. The conclusion of Wordsworth's close connection with Godwin in April 1795 was, I think, the end of his period as a 'pupil', who was anxious to form his ideals of social reform under the influence of the leading rational reformists. It also marked the beginning of his period as a 'preceptor', who tried out his own principles of 'the progress of human improvement' through the enlightenment of the individual.

3. The Preliminary Experiments in Education: Spring 1795 - July 1797

3. 1. London and Bristol

Some weeks before Wordsworth's arrival in London, in January 1795, Basil Montagu, the son of the Fourth Earl of Sandwich and his mistress Martha Ray, moved to London from Cobham in Surrey, where he had taken private pupils with Francis Wrangham. As Montagu later recollected in his *Autobiographical Notebook*, he intended to resume his study of law at Lincoln's Inn with the assistance of his Cambridge tutor, the Revd. Mr. John Lane.[1] At Lincoln's Inn Montagu became friends with John Frederick Pinney, the elder brother of his ex-pupil Azariah Pinney. It was not long before he resumed friendship with some of his Cambridge contemporaries in the Inns of Court like William Mathews and John Tweddell.

At his chambers at Lincoln's Inn Montagu for the first time lived with his two-year-old son Basil Caroline, whom he had left with his relatives since the death of his wife Caroline-Matilda in January 1793. It was probably during Wordsworth's stay with Mathews at the Middle Temple in February 1795 that Montagu admitted, '[Basil] was entrusted to my protection when I was little able to protect myself'.[2] 'By an accident', Montagu later recollected, 'I became acquainted with Wm Wordsworth' in March.[3] He proudly said, 'I consider my having met Wm Wordsworth the most fortunate event of my life'.[4] It seems to me more likely that Montagu's meeting with Wordsworth was not a mere accident but arranged by Mathews, who, having known much about Wordsworth's dedication to the late Raisley Calvert, expected him to be a great help to the friend of little ability to protect himself and his infant son. In his Cambridge period Wordsworth had not become friends with Montagu, but may have heard about this man of rank and wealth. Since his meeting with Montagu in March, Wordsworth may have had some opportunities to talk with Mathews and other mutual friends about what had happened to Montagu in the last four years. It was in late April that Wordsworth decided to move out of Godwin's neighbourhood to Montagu's chambers at Lincoln's Inn.

Montagu recollected how Wordsworth had spent the four months from April to August 1795 with him and his son:

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[1] *Basil Montagu's Autobiographical Notebook* (Dove Cottage Library No. 526), p. 4 (hereafter referred to as 'Montagu').
[2] Montagu, p. 4.
[3] Montagu, p. 5.
[4] Montagu, p. 5.

> He saw me, with great industry, perplexed and misled by passions wild and strong. In the wreck of my happiness he saw the probable ruin of my infant. He unremittingly, and to me imperceptibly, endeavoured to eradicate my faults, and to encourage my good dispositions.[5]

Having been 'perplexed and misled by passions wild and strong', Montagu appears to Wordsworth to have been totally different from a Godwinian man of reason. Wordsworth may have begun his instruction by tracing the development of Montagu's 'faults' and 'good dispositions' back to his childhood.

In his early childhood Montagu, like most upper-class children, had been educated at the castle at Hinchinbroke by Lord Sandwich's circle of the gifted people including his mother, who was known as a 'mistress of the Modern Languages, a fine singer, and an excellent performer on the harpsichord'.[6] Montagu's happy childhood suddenly concluded on 7 April 1779, when his mother was shot dead by a rejected suitor James Hackman. Soon after this occurrence, a pamphlet, entitled 'Love and Madness', was published by Dr. Herbert Croft. In the 1780s the murder of Martha Ray was one of the most popular themes of various kinds of publications.[7] Little space in publications was devoted to Martha Ray's children, though it is explicable that Lord Sandwich may have been worried about an effect of the disgraceful rumour on them. A year after the murder, in April 1780, Lord Sandwich sent the ten-year-old Montagu to Charterhouse in London, of which he was one of the senior governors. As one of the nine major public schools, Charterhouse aimed at the promotion of class identity. Lord Sandwich assuredly intended to educate his son among the future ruling classes. As one of the graduates Hartley Coleridge later recollected, Charterhouse was well-known for its 'regularity' and 'scrapes'.[8] Crum suggests that under the strict control of the headmaster, Dr. Berdmore, the pupils began and ended their 'hard' and 'regular' day with Latin prayers and devoted much of their time to religious observances.[9] In Montagu's

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[5] Montagu, p. 5.
[6] See N.C.Crum, 'The Life of Basil Montagu' (unpublished B.Litt. thesis, Oxford, 1950), p. 7 (hereafter referred to as 'Crum')
[7] See Henry Gunning, *Reminiscences of the University, Town and County of Cambridge, from the Year 1780*, 2 vols (London, 1854), I, p. 155 (hereafter referred to as 'Gunning').
[8] Hartley Coleridge's letter of January 1843; quoted from Crum, p. 11.
[9] Crum, p. 12.

Autobiographical Notebook there is no detailed record of his Charterhouse period, but it is most likely that he had been so fully conscious of his father's supervision as to do nothing to disobey or disappoint him. On leaving school, Montagu satisfied his father by winning the Charterhouse exhibition.[10]

At Michaelmas 1786 Montagu entered Christ's College, Cambridge, and had a successful start by receiving a Tancred studentship in divinity.[11] As his Cambridge contemporary Henry Gunning recollected, the murder of Martha Ray in April 1779 had been 'still in the memory of many persons' even in their university days.[12] However, Montagu was known to his contemporaries including Wordsworth for his academic attainments, rank, and wealth rather than for his connection with the heroine of the tragic love affair. As Bowen suggests, in the late eighteenth century Cambridge and Oxford nearly functioned as 'finishing schools for the privileged classes, where the wealthy often exhibited extravagant tastes, boorish manners and habits of indolence'.[13] Undergraduates were graded by 'social ranks', and the aristocracy were granted degrees in the shortest possible time.[14] It was not long before the debased condition of the university released Montagu from parental control and strict regulation, and made him 'remarkably idle'.[15] Lord Sandwich most likely kept an eye on his son, and noted his habits of indolence. To deprive Montagu of the evil tendency of the university, in January 1789 Lord Sandwich may have led his son to begin studying law at Gray's Inn while studying for a degree at Cambridge. Lord Sandwich saw the successful result of his supervision when Montagu graduated with a B.A. as 8th Wrangler in January 1790.[16]

Crum closely examines Montagu's connection with Wordsworth by referring to some records and chronological facts as well as to his autobiography. What she leaves out is that Wordsworth and Montagu declared independence at around the same time in the same place: autumn 1791, Cambridge. In September 1791 Wordsworth began a 'course of Oriental Literature' of Latin and Greek at Cambridge by following the

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[10] Gunning, I, p. 155.
[11] Gunning, I, p. 32.
[12] Gunning, I, p. 32.
[13] Bowen, p. 166.
[14] Bowen, p. 166.
[15] Gunning, I, pp. 32-3, describes the Montagu of 1786 as 'most agreeable, companionable', though 'remarkably idle'.
[16] See Crum, p. 16.

suggestion of his uncle, the Revd. William Cookson.[17] On 23 October he showed disobedience to his Anglican relatives by leaving Cambridge for London, then for revolutionary France in November. It was presumably soon after Wordsworth's arrival at Cambridge that Montagu married Caroline-Matilda Want. 'From that moment', Montagu recollected, 'my father never spoke to me'.[18] To Lord Sandwich his son's marriage to a lower-middle-class woman appears to have been an act of resistance not only to parental authority but also to the hierarchical society. Abandoned by his father, Montagu was 'exposed to great difficulty'.[19]

Although overlooked by Crum or other biographers, there are some intriguing similarities between Wordsworth's life and Montagu's of 1791 and 1792. Soon after moving to Orléans in December 1791, Wordsworth became acquainted with the Vallons and fell in love with Annette Vallon.[20] In February 1792 Wordsworth moved with Annette to her hometown Blois, and in March they conceived a child. In Blois he met Michel Beaupuy, with whom he had spent much time of the next half a year exchanging political, social, philosophical opinions. At Cambridge Montagu was helped by his friend Francis Wrangham to support himself and his wife by taking pupils together. His tutor, the Revd. Mr. John Lane, offered him guidance and paternal affection as well as a legacy of seven hundred pounds.[21] It was in March 1792 that Caroline-Matilda became pregnant.

Annette's Catholic parents were so ashamed of their unmarried daughter's pregnancy as to suggest that she and Wordsworth should move out of Blois to Orléans. Wordsworth left Orléans for Paris in October 1792, then for London in November in the hope of raising money to support Annette and their child by publishing his poems. On 15 December 1792 Wordsworth's daughter Caroline was baptized at Orléans Cathedral without her father's presence. On 27 December 1792 Caroline-Matilda gave birth to a son Basil Caroline. Only a few weeks later she died of childbirth. Just as Wordsworth had left the care of his daughter to Annette, Montagu had left his motherless son under the care of Caroline's sister, who lived at Brampton

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17 See *EY*, 62.

18 Montagu, p. 3.

19 Montagu, p. 3.

20 See Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 295. Johnston suggests that while looking for cheaper lodgings in Orléans Wordsworth came across the Vallons by 19 December 1792.

21 See Montagu, pp. 3-4.

in Huntingdonshire until January 1795.[22] In spring 1795 Wordsworth may have already abandoned his intention to live with Annette and Caroline in France. His dedication to the Montagus, I think, suggests that he may well have hoped to make amends for his failure to help Annette and Caroline by contributing to their happiness. It also seems likely that Wordsworth thought of the civilization of Montagu as his first step towards the progress of human improvement.

It was presumably not long before Wordsworth noticed that since his early childhood Montagu had been so obedient to his father and preceptors as to form neither psychological nor financial independence. His 'passions wild and strong'[23] may have derived in part from the lack of self-control. Crum explains how Wordsworth instructed Montagu:

> Wordsworth, having perceived that entire faith in the individual judgement was the foundation of Godwin's system, would have recognised it as likely to be of particular value to Montagu: acceptance of a system with such a foundation would be inconsistent with a course of behaviour regulated only by impulse and caprice . . .[24]

Although not referred to by Crum, there are some records to suggest the extent to which Montagu's behaviour had been regulated by 'impulse' and 'caprice'. Gunning later recollected Montagu as the most marked 'eccentric being' among his Cambridge contemporaries.[25] Azariah Pinney complained in a letter to his father of 4 December 1793, 'My tutor is frequently not at home when he appoints me to call on him, which I think unpardonable'.[26] I agree with Crum that Wordsworth may have drawn upon Godwin's rational principles. However, Wordsworth's aim was, I think, not to instruct Montagu to be an advocate of Godwin's rationalism but to suggest to him that reason could enable him to overcome 'impulse' and 'caprice', or, in Montagu's terms, his 'passions wild and strong'.[27] Crum insists that Wordsworth intended to lead Montagu to fulfil 'his obligations to society' by

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[22] Crum, p. 19. See also *EY*, 298n. In her letter of 10 and 12 September 1800 Dorothy referred to Basil's close connection with Henrietta Holworthy (the elder sister of his deceased mother) in Huntingdonshire.
[23] Montagu, p. 5.
[24] Crum, p. 31.
[25] Gunning, I, p. 157.
[26] Azariah to John Pretor Pinney, 4 December 1793; Pinney Papers, Family Letter Book 13 (the University of Bristol Archives).
[27] Montagu, p. 5.

following *Political Justice*.[28] However, as Montagu said, it was not with Godwinian benevolence but 'with great industry' that Wordsworth 'endeavoured to eradicate [his] faults, and to encourage [his] good dispositions'.[29] It seems more likely to me that Wordsworth may have followed his Hawkshead schoolmasters, who had never aimed to 'curb, exalt, reform the tender mind' but trained pupils to be the 'generous British youth' by helping them 'humour' 'Reason's law' and '[s]purn' 'Passion's rage'.[30] Just as the traveller in *A Night on Salisbury Plain* showed his 'Friendship' to the female vagrant in asking her to leave a 'dead house of the plain' together for the village,[31] Wordsworth may have hoped that his kindness and sympathy would lead Montagu to form happiness with his son, then to find a way in which he could be a useful member of society.

Crum asserts that the 'chance meeting with Wordsworth altered the whole course of Montagu's life'.[32] I would like to suggest that the 'whole course of Montagu's life' was altered more markedly by the chance meeting with Godwin. It was on 14 July, nearly two months after Wordsworth's last visit to Godwin's lodgings at No. 25 Chalton Street, Somers Town, of 22 April, that Godwin called on Wordsworth at Lincoln's Inn.[33] Roe says that having noted Montagu's admiration for *Political Justice*, Wordsworth apparently introduced him to Godwin in July.[34] Crum also regards Wordsworth as a link between Montagu and the author of *Political Justice*:

> Montagu was already an admirer of the *Political Justice* when he met Godwin, and the latter seems to have taken a liking to him. They became intimate, and the impression made by Wordsworth's representation of Godwin's teaching was, during the next three years, deepened and amplified by intercourse - familiar, but most respectfully valued - with the author.[35]

'Wordsworth's representation of Godwin's teaching', I think, may have made a less favourable impression on Montagu's views of *Political Justice* and its author than Crum suggests, for he was fully aware of the ill-effects of

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[28] Crum, p. 27.
[29] Montagu, p. 5.
[30] 'Lines Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead', 18, 10-1.
[31] *A Night on Salisbury Plain*, 30, 126.
[32] Crum, p. 27.
[33] See Reed, p. 164.
[34] Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 225.
[35] Crum, p. 40.

Godwin's authoritative indoctrination. It seems to me that Wordsworth may have tried out his method of instruction in enabling and encouraging Montagu to judge *Political Justice* by himself.

In summer 1795, while aiming to alter the course of Montagu's life, Wordsworth was introduced by Montagu to John Frederick Pinney, who also studied law at Lincoln's Inn, and his ex-pupil Azariah Pinney. There is no detailed record of how the friendship between Wordsworth and the Pinney brothers began and developed. However, it is readily explicable that the Pinneys may have become interested in Wordsworth's 'great industry', with which he 'endeavoured to eradicate [Montagu's] faults, and to encourage [his] good dispositions'.[36] It seems likely that the Pinneys and Wordsworth had the chance to talk about their shared experience in Paris in 1791 - 2 and their shared enthusiasm for the progress of human improvement. In the two weeks from Godwin's visit of 14 July two events altered the course of Wordsworth's life: one was his stay at Wrangham's curacy at Cobham with Montagu, and the other was John Frederick Pinney's offer of the use of Racedown Lodge. At Cobham Wordsworth apparently observed Wrangham's method of educating a pupil to be what Sir James Macintosh called 'a walking encyclopædia'.[37] Discussing education with Wrangham and Montagu and observing their pupils, Wordsworth may have become more anxious to try out his ideal method of instruction. It was, therefore, timely that late in July 1795 John Frederick Pinney asked Wordsworth to live at a country lodge at Racedown in Dorset, where he and Azariah would receive instruction in the holidays. In addition, John Frederick recommended Wordsworth to his father as a tutor for his fourteen-year-old brother, Pretor.[38]

On 29 July 1795 Wordsworth was back from Cobham, though away from Lincoln's Inn when Godwin called on him. It seems likely that at this time Godwin had the opportunity to talk with Montagu about *Political Justice*. On 15 August 1795, a few days before his moving out of London to the West Country, Wordsworth paid his last visit to Godwin with Mathews,

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[36] Montagu, p. 5.

[37] Gunning, II, p. 33, refers to the prospectus of Wrangham's and Montagu's intended mode of instruction, on which Macintosh commented, 'A boy thus educated will be a walking encyclopædia!' For Wordsworth's knowledge of Wrangham's tuition, see *EY*, 159, and 159n. Wordsworth concluded a letter to Wrangham of 20 November 1795 by saying, 'Remember me kindly to Mardenborough'. Christopher Mardenborough was, according to Shaver, a West Indian boy who had been one of Wrangham's pupils since January 1795. He was admitted at Lincoln's Inn on 11 June 1795. Wordsworth met him either at Lincoln's Inn or at Cobham.

[38] See *EY*, 148-9.

but found him not at his lodgings. Three days later, on 18 August, Godwin called on Wordsworth, who had already moved out of Montagu's chambers and left for Bristol. Montagu concluded the recollection of his four months' life with Wordsworth by saying, 'After some time he proposed to take my child from my chambers in London into Dorset, where he was about to settle with his sister'.[39] The following part of his autobiography concerning his life from August 1795 to December 1799 is later cut off by an unknown hand.[40] What is known to us is that in the former half of this period, from August 1795 to July 1797, Montagu's enthusiasm for *Political Justice* reached its height through his friendship with the author. It was Montagu who would link Wordsworth with Godwin and his advocates in 1796 - 1797.

In August 1795 Wordsworth came to Bristol to be interviewed by John Pretor Pinney, the father of the Pinney brothers and merchant of the West India fortune. He spent five weeks at Pinney's house in Great George Street, then moved into Pinney's country lodge at Racedown in Dorset on 26 September 1795. As critics and biographers have suggested, the most significant event of this time was Wordsworth's first meeting with Coleridge and Southey. I would like to discuss Wordsworth's five-week stay with Pinney in Bristol as a significant preparatory step towards his practice of education in his West Country period. In the late eighteenth century Bristol had a large, radical, free-thinking, dissenting population, which focused much attention on the reform of the existing educational system. Education was Pinney's principal concern, for much space in his account books and letters was devoted to the education of his children and the instruction of his slaves in the West Indies.[41] Considering Wordsworth's activities during his five-week stay in Bristol, I would like to suggest how Wordsworth may have developed his views of education.

In summer 1793 John Pretor Pinney read a prospectus of private tuition published by Montagu and Wrangham. Although there is no existing copy of the prospectus, Sir James Macintosh's comment on it, 'A boy thus educated will be a walking encyclopædia!',[42] suggests that Montagu and Wrangham intended to lead pupils to acquire a wide range of knowledge in a short period. In fact, Montagu's and Wrangham's

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[39] Montagu, pp. 5-6.

[40] The latter half of page 6 is cut off. Page 7 begins, 'after having resided two or three years in Dorsetshire, Wm Wordsworth resolved to settle at Grasmere and my child was received by his aunt, the sister of his mother, who lived upon a small income at Brampton in Huntingdonshire'.

[41] The Pinney family's account books and letters are part of the Pinney Papers.

[42] See Gunning, II, p. 33.

prospectus attracted the attention of Pinney, who planned to prepare the eighteen-year-old Azariah for university education. In August Pinney wrote to Montagu and said, 'My son . . . is highly delighted at the prospect of enjoying the society of you and Mr. Wrangham, as well as receiving introduction from Gentlemen of your known abilities'. Pinney concluded this letter by saying, 'My son . . . I flatter myself, will not altogether prove unworthy of your esteem'.[43] As Pinney had expected, Azariah proved to be worthy of Montagu's esteem, and Montagu was regarded by Pinney as suited to instruct his son to be his successor. In October 1793 Azariah moved to Cambridge to become a pupil of Wrangham and Montagu.[44]

Pinney's keen interest in the education of his children derived in part from his experience in the small island of Nevis in the West Indies, where he had spent almost twenty years from 1764 to 1783. In this period more than 1,000 white people lived in Nevis while Negroes were more than 8,000.[45] However, Pinney seems to have found no companion among the whites, since he said in a letter of March 1765, 'The little time I have resided in this part of the world has given me more knowledge into the artifice and cunning of mankind, than ever I experienced before'. In his letter of 1778 Pinney went into details about the 'artifice and cunning' of the white people:

> From the many repeated proofs of infidelity I have experienced in this island united with dishonourable actions frequently exhibited in the dealings between man and man, it is no wonder I should be heartily tired of residing here, and of my endeavouring to contract my concerns and wind up my affairs as soon as possible, so as to enable me to live in my native land and superintend the education of my children, though it may prove injurious to my fortune.[46]

Having spent almost fourteen years in Nevis, Pinney was aware that the only means to protect his children from the 'dishonourable actions' in 'the dealings between man and man' was to educate them in their 'native land'.

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[43] Pinney to Montagu, 20 August 1793; Pinney Papers, Family Letter Book 13.

[44] The family history of the Pinneys is fully documented in Richard Pares, *A West-India Fortune* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1950) (hereafter referred to as 'Pares'). For the education of Azariah, see Pares, p. 167.

[45] See Pares, p. 22.

[46] John Pretor Pinney to Mills and Swanton, 28 September 1778; Pinney Papers, Family Letter Book 13.

Rousseau's *Émile* insists on the advantages of Robinson Crusoe's primitive life. Pinney's letter, on the contrary, suggests that living far away from the 'native land' means living without common sense or moral standards. Pinney, in fact, witnessed how a man of noble character became corrupted while living in Nevis. In 1768 Pinney appointed his cousin, Joseph Gill, as an overseer. Gill made a considerable success of the plantation management. Pinney's account book of 1783 reads that Gill's one year's work was rewarded with more than £200 whereas other overseers received £100.[47] However, soon after Pinney returned to England in 1783, Gill began to exhibit the proof of infidelity: he made up the accounts the wrong way, sent no report to Pinney, and paid little attention to the plantations. To deprive Gill of the ill-effects of the West Indian life, Pinney brought him back to England, and made him caretaker at Racedown Lodge. Pinney's supervision seems not to have completely counteracted Gill's dishonourable actions, since Wordsworth borrowed his surname for a character of immorality in one of his contributions to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, entitled 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill'.[48]

As Pinney's letter shows, Nevis was far from ideal for the education of children. In 1778 Pinney decided to educate his eldest son John Frederick in England, and left him under the care of his friend in Dorset William Coker. Born and bred as a 'West-Indian' until the age of five, John Frederick may have already shown some of the West Indian 'dishonourable actions'. Pinney suggested to Coker the appropriate course of education:

> My greatest pride is to be considered as a private country gentleman, therefore am resolved to content myself with a little and shall avoid even the name of a West-Indian . . . collectively, [West-Indians] are a dissipated, unthinking race . . . I hope therefore my friends will endeavour to inculcate in [John Frederick's] tender mind, the principles of an honest, independent Englishman.[49]

Pinney expected that studying in England, John Frederick would avoid 'the name of a West-Indian' by eradicating all the influence of the West-Indian 'dissipated, unthinking race' and establish himself as an 'honest, independent Englishman'. Soon afterwards Pinney sent his second son Azariah back to England to be educated by Coker.

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[47] Pinney Papers, Account Book 1783.
[48] For more about Gill, see Pares, pp. 142-3.
[49] John Pretor Pinney to William Coker, 1778; Pinney Papers, Family Letter Book 13.

However, some of the West Indian 'dishonourable actions' seem not to have been completely eradicated by the education in England. John Thelwall portrayed the vicious characters of the West Indians whom he had met at St Thomas's hospital:

> Among the professional youth with whom he now associated, were several West Indians; and . . . his observation of that effeminate, or rather childish vivacity, that unfeeling and tyrannical vehemence, and that sort of hoggish voluptuousness, so frequently predominated amongst them, produced those Delineations of West Indian Manners . . .[50]

Pinney most likely knew much about what had become of little West Indian boys in England without parental supervision. Although there is no evidence in the Pinneys' existing letters, Pinney may have heard from Coker about his sons' 'Delineations of West Indian Manners' such as 'effeminate or childish vivacity', 'unfeeling and tyrannical vehemence' and 'hoggish voluptuousness'. To superintend the education of his children, Pinney at last returned to Bristol in 1783.

At his house in Great George Street Pinney and his partner James Tobin began to act as agents for West Indian planters. His 'greatest pride' as a 'private country gentleman' led him to open his house to men and women of integrity in and around Bristol. Near Pinney's house, in Park Street, was the school for girls run by Hannah More and her four sisters. There is no firm evidence of Pinney's acquaintance with More, but it seems most likely that Pinney heard about More's connection with Elizabeth Montagu's circle of women of literary and intellectual interests (known as 'The Blue Stocking Society') and her enthusiasm for the improvement of women's social position. Pinney may have had some opportunities to discuss More's schooling with those involved in education in the Bristol area. As an agent for the West Indian planters, Pinney knew much about More's support for the campaign against slavery. However, it seems to me that Pinney's interest in the instruction of his black servants and slaves led him to pay more attention to More's involvement in the Sunday School movement, in particular to her method of training up the lower classes in habits of industry and piety.[51]

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[50] John Thelwall, *Poems, Chiefly Written in Retirement* (Hereford, 1801), 'Prefatory Memoir', pp. xx-xxi.

[51] For More's Sunday School education, see Richardson, 85.

It was not long before Bristol appears to Pinney to have been the least favourable place to teach his children 'the principles of an honest, independent Englishman', since it had a considerable number of returnees from the West Indies. In April 1785 Pinney sent the twelve-year-old John Frederick to the grammar school at Reading. In September 1787 John Frederick became a student at Eton. He spent a year of 1791 - 1792 in revolutionary Paris, then entered Trinity College, Oxford in November 1792. Later he began the study of law at Lincoln's Inn.

The education of John Frederick enables us to consider the reason why Pinney did not leave his fourteen-year-old son Pretor under Wordsworth's tuition, but sent him to the grammar school at Reading. Although having spent less than three years in Nevis, Pretor appears to Pinney to have been imbued with some West Indian vices. Having seen Wordsworth 'unremittingly' and 'with great industry' 'endeavour[ing] to eradicate [Montagu's] faults, and to encourage [his] good dispositions',[52] John Frederick may have hoped that Wordsworth would enable his younger brother to get rid of his West Indian dishonourable manners. Pinney most likely noticed Wordsworth's ability as a tutor and his enthusiasm for education, but he thought that Pretor should acquire 'the principles of an honest, independent Englishman' by forming friendship with other English boys.[53]

Discussing the education of those called 'West Indians' (those who were born and bred in the West Indies) with Pinney, Wordsworth may have considered how he and Dorothy would look after Montagu's son, then aged two-and-a-half, at Racedown, a secluded village in Dorset. Just as Pinney had sent his sons back to England in order to keep them away from the West Indian vices, Wordsworth hoped that the life at Racedown would eradicate the ill-effects of his father's 'uncertain management' on Basil's mind.[54] It was readily explicable for Wordsworth that Basil would not find many friends of his own age at Racedown. However, Wordsworth may have been confident that he and Dorothy could bring up Basil to be 'an honest, independent Englishman' by showing him honourable actions in 'the dealings between man and man' like affection and friendship.[55]

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[52] Montagu, p. 5.
[53] John Pretor Pinney to William Coker, 1778; Pinney Papers, Family Letter Book 13.
[54] See Montagu, p. 5.
[55] See John Pretor Pinney to Mills and Swanton, 28 September 1778; Pinney Papers, Family Letter Book 13.

Both Pinney and Bristol also led Wordsworth to consider another kind of 'dealings between man and man', namely the slave trade. In a letter to Mathews of 24 October 1795 Wordsworth said, 'I stayed at Bristol at least five weeks with a family whom I found amiable in all its branches'(*EY*, 153). As a contributor to the democratic paper, entitled *Telegraph*, Mathews may have wondered why Wordsworth had regarded the merchant of West-India fortune as 'amiable' and why he had accepted the offer of Racedown Lodge despite knowing much of Pinney's commitment to the slave trade. There are, in fact, records of Pinney's 'amiable' attitude towards his slaves in his account books and letters. A considerable amount of money had been spent on the welfare of his slaves. Much space in his letters to his plantation managers was devoted to the treatment of his slaves. For instance, he said

> It is unnecessary, I flatter myself, to say a word respecting the care of my slaves and stock - your good sense must tell you they are the sinews of a plantation and must claim your particular care and attention. Humanity tempered with justice towards the former must ever be exercised, and when sick I am satisfied they will experience every kindness from you, they surely deserve it, being the very means of our support.[56]

We cannot deny that his maxims of benevolence were, unlike Godwin's doctrine, dictated in part by business sense. However, it is apparent that Pinney's treatment of his slaves was humane, for he regarded his slaves as deserving of 'humanity', 'justice' and 'kindness' whereas most planters treated slaves as a part of 'stock' which would never be 'sick'. Having admitted that most of the white people had displayed neither humanity nor justice, Pinney may have regarded some Negroes as more innocent and sensible. Pinney's letters, in fact, prove his 'humanity' and 'kindness' to his Negro servant called Pero, who was bought in 1765.[57] Pero was assuredly one of the 'sensible good men' that Pinney had met in Nevis. During his stay with Pinney, Wordsworth most likely noticed his kindness to Pero, and possibly heard about Pero's dedication to the Pinney family.[58] Through his discussions with Pinney, Wordsworth, I think, at last went beyond Godwin's

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[56] John Pretor Pinney to Henry Douncer, 2 March 1765; Pinney Papers, Family Letter Book 13.

[57] See Pares, p. 130.

[58] The bridge near Pinney's house in Great George Street is now known as 'Pero's Bridge', which is said to be named after Pero.

rational principles to his humane way of pursuing the progress of human improvement.

During his five-week stay in Bristol from late August to 26 September 1795 Wordsworth had some opportunities to talk with Pinney's guests about the reform of the educational system in and around Bristol. At one of the Pinney's meetings Wordsworth first met Coleridge and Southey. The beginning of Wordsworth's friendship with Coleridge, I think, marks the end of his allegiance to Godwin. Wordsworth was no longer a pupil 'misguided' by *Political Justice.* He would never act as a preceptor 'misguiding' others with Godwin's abstract rationalism.[59] Now he was determined to be a preceptor aiming at the progress of human improvement through the happiness of individuals.

3. 2. Racedown

On 26 September 1795 Wordsworth brought Dorothy and little Basil to Racedown Lodge in Dorset. At his first home Wordsworth planned to elaborate his principles of the civilization of individuals through the fostering of Basil and the instruction of Dorothy and the Pinneys. In the meantime he hoped to develop his literary talents by knowing more of Coleridge's 'very great' talent on the one hand, and intended to consider a way in which he could encourage the progress of human improvement by learning from Southey's 'powers of mind' on the other.[60] However, it was not long before the Wordsworths became disappointed with the local people, who were 'wretchedly poor; ignorant and overwhelmed with every vice that usually attend[ed] ignorance in that class, viz - lying and picking and stealing &c &c.'[61] Even among the middle class neighbours they did not see any worthy 'soul'(*EY*, 154). Wordsworth regarded it as necessary to contact worthy figures in Bristol, in particular 'two extraordinary young men, Southey and Coleridge'.[62] Dorothy attempted to 'manufacture' society with her 'nearest neighbours', though saying with disappointment, 'I do not think we shall be much benefited by their society', for 'they have not much conversation'(*EY*, 161). Basil later vilified the Wordsworths by stating that 'they had treated him with such cruelty that he was constantly employed in the most menial occupations: and, but for the pity of the poor villagers, who privately supplied him with such pittance as they could ill spare, he should

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[59] See The 1805 *Prelude*, X, 878-88.
[60] See *EY*, 153. Wordsworth to Mathews, 20 and 24 October 1795.
[61] *EY*, 154.
[62] *EY*, 154. *EY*, 156, Wordsworth to Mathews, late October - early November 1795.

have been starved'.[63] As was reported by his father, Basil's censure was rather doubtful, though suggesting that he had seen few people except 'the poor villagers' around Racedown Lodge.[64] And the Wordsworths' existing letters suggest that they had formed few connections with their neighbours in their Racedown period.

Although with few or no worthy souls in the neighbourhood, Racedown Lodge satisfied the Wordsworths' literary enthusiasm with its 'very tolerable library' of 'four hundred volumes' which consisted of a surprising store of English and other classics, theology, and history.[65] In particular, a considerable number of Italian books were appreciated by Dorothy as well as by Wordsworth.[66] More than four years previously, on 26 June 1791, Dorothy said

> We promise ourselves much pleasure from reading Italian together at some time, he wishes that I was acquainted with the Italian poets, but how much have I to learn which plain English will teach me. (*EY*, 52)

It was in their Racedown period that Wordsworth and Dorothy fulfilled the promise. In the library Dorothy may have spent much time 'studying Italian very hard'(*EY*, 166). Just as her uncle William Cookson had instructed her in reading French at Penrith, Wordsworth may have enabled and encouraged her to become familiar with the 'Italian poets' in a short period.

In her West Country period the development of Dorothy's views of education was as marked as the development of her literary talents. In late summer 1795 while Wordsworth was widening his political, social, and philosophical views and elaborating his educational principles in Bristol, Dorothy was also preparing for her new life with her brother and little Basil. At the beginning of September she wrote a long letter to her Halifax friend, Jane, who had recently begun her new life with her husband, John Marshall. She devoted much space to describing what she would do for the two-and-a-half-year-old Basil. Although having not yet seen Basil, Dorothy thought that Basil 'could not be very well taken care of either in his father's chambers or under the uncertain management of various friends of Mr M with whom

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[63] Montagu, pp. 42-3.
[64] Montagu, p. 43.
[65] See Bergen Evans and Hester Pinney, 'Racedown and the Wordsworths', *The Review of English Studies*, 8 (1932), 1-18; p. 10 (hereafter referred to as 'Evans & Pinney').
[66] See *EY*, 155, and 155n.

he [had] frequently stayed'(*EY*, 147). Having looked after the Cookson children at Forncett, Dorothy regarded it as necessary for the nurture of infants to 'adhere with the strict attention to certain rules'(*EY*, 149). She said, 'many things must depend upon unforeseen circumstances'(*EY*, 149), but she was determined to 'act with resolution and steadiness'(*EY*, 150). In saying so, she may have thought of Wordsworth, who had 'unremittingly' 'endeavoured to eradicate [Montagu's] faults, and to encourage [his] good dispositions'.[67] With Wordsworth's assistance, Dorothy was convinced that she would 'succeed' in eradicating the 'disadvantages under which [Basil had] laboured'(*EY*, 150) and in encouraging his good dispositions. It should be noted that some three years later, in July 1798, the Wordsworths' education of Basil concluded with the successful result of their 'resolution and steadiness'(*EY*, 150), and Dorothy was proud to say, 'Much of [Basil's] good temper must be owning to our regularity of temper, and the consequent equable treatment which receives from us'.[68]

Besides the care of little Basil, Dorothy expected another charge, namely, the education of a 'natural daughter of Mr Tom Myers', who had been born and bred to be 'about 3 or 4 years old' in India.[69] At Forncett Dorothy had looked after Mary Cookson since her birth of March 1790 until December 1794. Dorothy may have been confident of her ability of looking after the girl. In addition, she felt sympathy for the girl, who, like herself, had spent most of her life apart from her father. When she said, 'I shall feel myself quite as a mother to her'(*EY*, 150), Dorothy most likely intended to follow Miss Threlkeld, who had treated her with maternal affection. The girl was expected to be 'of great importance' to Dorothy's 'comfort and happiness' by placing her in a state of neither 'very little use' nor 'dependence'(*EY*, 150). Just as Dorothy had contributed much to the happiness of the Cooksons by teaching at the Sunday School and looking after their children, she was in the hope of '*doing something*' to maintain her first 'comfortable home' with Wordsworth by devoting herself to the care of two children (*EY*, 150, 146).

The girl may have been expected to be 'of great importance' to Basil's 'comfort and happiness' as well. It seems not unlikely that Dorothy intended to follow *Émile* in which Rousseau insisted on the importance of

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[67] Montagu, p. 5.

[68] *EY*, 221. Dorothy to Mrs. Elizabeth Rawson (née Threlkeld), 13 June and 3 July 1798.

[69] *EY*, 147. For Tom Myers, see *EY*, 147n. and Reed p. 169. Thomas Myers (1764-1835), cousin of the Wordsworths, became a civil servant of the East India Company in 1781. No evidence has been found that his daughter ever left India.

Sophie for Émile's comfort and happiness. No record suggests when Dorothy read *Émile*, but Wordsworth wrote in the 'Preface' to *The Borderers* (the earliest manuscript of which was written presumably in late 1796): 'A child, Rousseau has observed, will tear in pieces fifty toys before he will think of making one'(*Pr. W.* I. 76-7).[70] It is most likely that Wordsworth became familiar with some of Rousseau's ideals while forming connections with Godwin and his advocates in London in spring 1795. Dorothy may well have learned Rousseau's educational principles from her uncle William Cookson. Even if she was not yet under the influence of Rousseau in late 1795, her experience of nurturing the Cookson children convinced her that children could encourage one another to develop their faculties.

On 30 November 1795 Dorothy wrote to Jane Marshall about her two months' life with Basil at Racedown:

> I do not think there is any Pleasure more delightful than that of marking the development of child's faculties, and observing his little occupations. (*EY*, 160)

Dorothy's comment suggests that she had done her duty more successfully than she had expected in September. In particular, she pointed out that she had made use of the natural scenery at Racedown for the 'great improvements' of Basil's body and mind (see *EY*, 161). However, Dorothy had 'one great disappointment'(*EY*, 161), for the plan for the education of the girl had been abandoned by Mr Myers. She said

> I lament it the more as I am sure if her father knew all the circumstances he would wish her to be placed under our care. (*EY*, 161)

Dorothy left no reference to the reason why her father had abandoned the plan. What is known from her letter is that she had done and was to do 'all that [her] abilities [would] permit' in fostering little Basil (*EY*, 149).

It was not only for Basil but also for Wordsworth that Dorothy aimed to do all that her abilities permitted in her West Country period. Her dedication to the fostering of Basil and the entire household enabled

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[70] See Wu, pp. 119-20. Wu suggests that Wordsworth and Dorothy were reading books on education as an aid to bringing up Basil. Although there is no evidence that Wordsworth had read *Émile* before his composition of the 'Preface' to *The Borderers* in late 1796, Wu says that Wordsworth seems likely to have been influenced by Rousseau's educational theory since his teacher at Hawkshead, William Taylor, was probably influenced by *Émile*.

Wordsworth to concentrate on his literary activities. Soon after he settled in Racedown, he began the revision of *A Night on Salisbury Plain*, which he had completed almost one year previously, in October 1794. In a letter to Mathews of 7 November 1794 Wordsworth referred to *A Night on Salisbury Plain* presumably in the hope of drawing Mathews's attention to poetry as a more suited means to encourage the enlightenment of society than their projected monthly periodical. However, as he said to Mathews, dealing with 'no character at all'(*EY*, 136), *A Night on Salisbury Plain* would not appeal to those who had already been familiar with publications concerning the miseries of society. He may well have remembered that his description of the female beggar in *An Evening Walk* had been regarded by the *Critical Review* as of less 'strength' than John Langhorne's description of the war widow in *The Country Justice*.[71] Having been familiar with Langhorne's works since his Hawkshead days, Wordsworth knew that the strength of the characters in *The Country Justice* derived from Langhorne's experience as 'an acting magistrate' in Somerset, concerned with charity, the poor laws, and the penal law.[72] In October 1795 Wordsworth began to revise *A Night on Salisbury Plain* by consulting Langhorne's *Country Justice*, which he had read in summer or autumn 1793 when composing *A Night on Salisbury Plain*.[73]

In a letter to Francis Wrangham of 20 November 1795 Wordsworth referred to the revised version of *A Night on Salisbury Plain*, entitled *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*:

> . . . since I came to Racedown I have made alterations and additions so material as that it may be looked on almost as another work. (*EY*, 159)

He explained what the 'alterations and additions' mainly concerned:

> Its object is partly to expose the vices of the penal law and the calamities of war as they affect individuals. (*EY*, 159)

Wordsworth may have thoroughly scrutinized Langhorne's treatment of 'the vices of the penal law and the calamities of war'. As the *Critical Review* suggested, Langhorne's description of the war widow in *The Country Justice* was of more 'strength' than Wordsworth's female beggar in *An Evening*

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[71] The *Critical Review*, n.s., 8 (July 1793), 347-8; quoted from *Cornell EW*, 303-4.
[72] John Langhorne, *The Poetical Works of John Langhorne* (London, 1804, repr. 1971), the 'Memoir of the Author', p. 23.
[73] See Wu, p. 84.

Walk.[74] Mary Jacobus suggests that the characters in *The Country Justice* are calculated to 'shock the reader out of his assumptions by confronting him with glaring miscarriages of justice or shortcomings in poor-law administration'.[75] Wordsworth most certainly noticed Langhorne's method of 'shock[ing] the reader out of his assumptions'. His letter suggests that he intended to make his characters of more strength than Langhorne's by dealing not with 'the calamities of war' but with 'the calamities of war as they affect[ed] individuals'(*EY*, 159).

Aiming to expose 'the vices of the penal law and the calamities of war', Wordsworth transformed the traveller in *A Night on Salisbury Plain* into a sailor on the run after committing a murder and replaced the female wanderer with an aged discharged soldier. *Adventures on Salisbury Plain* begins with an encounter of the two characters on Salisbury Plain:

> A Traveller on the skirt of Sarum's Plain
> O'ertook an aged Man with feet half bare;
> Propp'd on a trembling staff he crept with pain,
> His legs from slow disease distended were;
> (*Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, 1 - 4)

The traveller draws near to the aged man to examine him more closely:

> His temples just betrayed their silver hair
> Beneath a kerchief's edge, that wrapp'd his head
> To fence from off his face the breathing air.
> Stuck miserably o'er with patch and shred
> His ragged coat scarce showed the Soldier's faded red.
> (*Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, 5 - 9)

The old man is one of the discharged soldiers, whose miserable conditions are the principal literary subjects in the 1790s. However, unlike political tracts, *Adventures on Salisbury Plain* does not investigate in depth the ill-treatment of discharged soldiers. Instead, the old man's miserable state leads the traveller to wonder why he is making his difficult journey across Salisbury Plain:

> "And dost thou hope across this Plain to trail
> That frame o'ercome with years and malady,
> Those feet that scarcely can outcrawl the snail,

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[74] The *Critical Review*, n.s., 8 (July 1793), 347-8; *Cornell EW*, 303-4.
[75] Jacobus, p. 145.

These withered arms of thine, that faltering knee?"
(*Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, 10 - 3)

Pity for the old man leads the traveller to say, 'Come, I am strong and stout, come lean on me'(14). The old man, in reply to the traveller's kindness, tells him 'how he with the Soldier's life had striven /And Soldier's wrongs'(20-1). As Wordsworth said in a letter to Wrangham of 20 November 1795, the old man's story deals chiefly with how 'the Soldier's life' has affected him.[76]

The details about the miseries of the old man are explained by suggesting the reason he journeys across the plain:

> . . . he had limp'd to meet a daughter driven
> By circumstance which did all faith exceed
> From every stay but him: his heart was riven
> At the bare thought: the creature that had need
> Of any aid from him most wretched was indeed.
> (*Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, 23 - 7)

Although not alluding to present social concerns, the simple description of the discharged soldier is, I think, calculated to encourage the reader to consider how 'the calamities of war' have affected the aged soldier. The passage concerning the old man, therefore, shows Wordsworth's experiment in his method of encouraging the reader to go deep into the inner dimensions of the sufferer.

In December 1795, while composing *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, Wordsworth was visited by John Frederick and Azariah Pinney. For the five weeks from Christmas 1795 to 6 March 1796 the Pinney brothers had stayed with the Wordsworths at Racedown. The Pinneys' aim was to receive Wordsworth's instruction, which they had observed at Montagu's chambers at Lincoln's Inn in spring and summer 1795. In a letter from Cambridge of 16 February 1794 Azariah expressed his wish to 'cultivate the acquaintance of the worthy part of our University' like 'an Ornament to the literary world'. However, his wish soon proved to be hopeless, since Cambridge was 'not the place to promote and facilitate a man's studies but to abandon [himself] to every species of intemperance and debauchery'.[77] Now at Racedown Lodge the Pinney brothers expected Wordsworth to 'promote and facilitate' their studies.

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[76] See *EY*, 159.

[77] Azariah Pinney to his mother, 16 February 1794; Pinney Papers, Family Letter Book 13.

The Pinneys were keen in particular on literature, for Dorothy recollected in her letter of 7 March 1796 that during their stay at Racedown the Pinneys had been so 'fond of reading' as to stimulate the Wordsworths to 'read a good deal'(*EY*, 165). In the subsequent part of the letter Dorothy said

> Within the last month I have read Tristram Shandy, Brydone's Sicily and Malta, and Moore's Travels in France. I have also read lately Madame Roland's *Memoir*, Louvet and some other french things - very entertaining. (*EY*, 166)

Dorothy most likely read these books with Wordsworth and the Pinneys, and presumably discussed some with them. Dorothy's letter suggests that spending some five weeks at Racedown, the Pinneys may have become more enthusiastic not only about literature but also about Wordsworth's literary talents.

Through her conversations with the Pinneys, Dorothy detected the effects of education on their dispositions. She found in John Frederick 'the sweetest temper' that she had ever observed while regarding Azariah as a 'very good young man, and much more pleasing in manners than the generality of young men', though 'not so great a favourite' with her as his brother (*EY*, 165). Dorothy explained how John Frederick had acquired the 'sweetest temper':

> He has travelled a good deal, in the way of education, been at one of the great schools, and at Oxford, has had always plenty of money to spend and every indulgence: all these things instead of having spoiled him or made him conceited have wrought the pleasantest and best effects, he is well-informed, has an uncommonly good heart, and is very agreeable in conversation. (*EY*, 165)

Dorothy thought that John Frederick had become 'well-informed' and acquired an 'uncommonly good heart' by emulating his friends at school as well as by seeing places and people in foreign countries.

Whereas John Frederick had been enabled and encouraged to reach his potential in the way of education, Azariah had been 'brought up as a merchant'(*EY*, 165) under the strict control of his father since his early childhood. On 1 May 1789 Azariah, then aged fourteen, was appointed by his father as a partner in the West India trading company, Pinney and Tobin,

though having no part in its business at this time. He was soon sent to a school at Frankfurt-am-Main in Germany, which was then famous for its commercial training.[78] Having spent some time in 1791 - 1792 in Paris, Azariah became a private pupil of Francis Wrangham and Basil Montagu in October 1793, and remained with them until spring 1795. Macintosh's remark, 'A boy thus educated will be a walking encyclopædia!',[79] suggests that Wrangham and Montagu tried to prepare Azariah for his future business by providing him with a wide range of knowledge. Crum says that their course of study was 'entirely inoffensive to the conservative principles of the elder Mr. Pinney'.[80] Montagu most likely drew upon his experience of the dominant teaching method of public schools and the universities like 'the recitation' and 'the endless repeating of lines'.[81] Spending some five weeks together, the Wordsworths may well have noticed that whereas John Frederick was 'very agreeable in conversation'(*EY*, 165), Azariah constructed his ideas on a firm, solid foundation of knowledge. Dorothy's letter of 7 March 1796 suggests that she may have planned to educate Basil to be such a 'well-informed' man of an 'uncommonly good heart'(*EY*, 165) as John Frederick by enabling and encouraging him to reach his potential.

Talking with the Pinneys about their upbringings, the Wordsworths presumably began to consider education as a lifelong process consisting of progressive stages. Basil was three years old at this time, though they became fully aware of their responsibility for his future. Two and a half years later, in mid June 1798, the Wordsworths decided not to take Basil to Germany. Dorothy explained the reason in a letter to her aunt Elizabeth Rawson (née Threlkeld):

> . . . the experiment of taking a child of his age into a foreign country is at any rate hazardous, and might be prejudicial if we were not so placed that he might see much of other children . . . [82]

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[78] For Azariah's early education, see Evans & Pinney, p. 4 , and Pares, pp. 167, 172.
[79] Gunning, II, p. 33.
[80] Crum, p. 23. Crum focuses on the fact that Pinney recommended Wrangham and Montagu to other West-India merchants.
[81] See Bowen, p. 166.
[82] *EY*, 221. Dorothy Wordsworth to Elizabeth Rawson, Alfoxden 13 June/Bristol 3 July 1798.

Dorothy seems to have agreed with Pinney, who, having noticed the ill-effects of educating his children in the West Indies, sent John Frederick and Azariah back to England and enabled them to see 'much of other children'.

Dorothy also agreed with Pinney about the significance of friendship in saying, 'it is not good for a child to be educated alone'(*EY*, 221), since

> After the age of about four years he begins to want some other stimulus than the mere life that is in him; his efforts would be greater but he must have an object, he would run but he must run *races*, he would climb a wall but he has no motive to do it when he is alone; he must have some standard by which to compare his powers or he will have no pleasure in exercising them, and he becomes lifeless and inactive. (*EY*, 222)

Writing this passage, Dorothy presumably recollected her Halifax period, in which she had been brought up by Elizabeth Rawson with other five children. She may have become more convinced of the significance of friendship while observing John Frederick, who, unlike Azariah, had found stimulus, motives, and standards while studying with friends. A sole pupil could have neither motive nor standard to pursue his psychological and physical development. Dorothy's letter suggests that the Wordsworths had owed some of their views on education to John Pretor Pinney through their connections with the Pinney brothers. Pares thinks it 'doubtful' that the young Pinneys and the young Wordsworths really knew much about each other, for '[Azariah] had not enough literary discernment to see the absurdity of asking Wordsworth, of all poets, to write "a few lines panegyrical of the object of Jack's attachment, whose name," he added with a business-like attention to detail, "is composed of three syllables"'.[83] However, Dorothy's letter of 6 March 1796 suggests that the Pinneys and the Wordsworths knew much about each other, in particular about their literary enthusiasm and their approval of the significance of friendship.

The Pinneys' literary enthusiasm was stimulated in part by the discussion of Wordsworth's *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*. Wu suggests that Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (published January 1796) most likely influenced 'the fair copy [of *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*] Wordsworth would have made with publication in mind in spring 1796'.[84] In particular, Wu says that the

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[83] Pares, pp. 167-8.
[84] Wu, p. 153.

description of 'the Sailor's ignominious end' may have been derived from Wollstonecraft's account of 'a crowd of people of every description' assembling to watch 'a man executed and his body burnt' in Letter XIX.[85] Wordsworth seems to me to go much further than Wollstonecraft by showing not only 'the Sailor's ignominious end' but also the 'vices of the penal law' which have gradually numbed the human mind:

> . . . dissolute men, unthinking and untaught,
> Planted their festive booths beneath his face;
> And to that spot, which idle thousands sought,
> Women and children were by fathers brought . . .
> (*Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, 821 - 4)

The gibbet is complemented by the dissolute and 'untaught' crowd which surrounds 'that spot'. Although not remarked upon by Wu, describing the execution of the murderer, Wordsworth presumably referred to Langhorne's passage in *The Country Justice* concerning the execution of the robber, who showed pity for the lifeless mother:

> His life the gen'rous robber paid,
> Lost by that pity which his steps delay'd!
> No soul-discerning Mansfield sate to hear,
> No Hertford bore his prayer to mercy's ear;
> No lib'ral justice first assign'd the gaol,
> Or urg'd, as Camplin would have urg'd his tale.
> (*Country Justice*, ii. 'Protection of the Poor', 233-8)

Langhorne reminded the magistrates in his parish of a 'guardian magistrate'(132) in the 'social, hospitable days'(145) like 'Mansfield', 'Hertford', and 'Camplin', who had shown 'lenity', 'pity', and 'justice' for criminals. Wordsworth, on the other hand, went much further by leading the reader to consider 'distress and misery' with compassion and benevolence. Although it was impossible for individuals to reform the miserable state of the lower classes, they could encourage each other to overcome 'the vices of the penal law' and to face 'the calamities of war'(*EY*, 159). Dorothy and the Pinneys most likely discussed *Country Justice* and Wollstonecraft's *Letters* with Wordsworth, and possibly provided him with some ideas for *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*. On 6 March 1796 Wordsworth

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[85] Wu, p. 152.

was so satisfied with *Adventures on Salisbury Plain* as to ask the Pinneys to bring the manuscript of it to Cottle, then to Coleridge.[86]

It was not long after the Pinneys' departure that Wordsworth received from Montagu a copy of the second edition of *Political Justice*. At Christmas 1795 Montagu was expected by the Wordsworths and the Pinneys, but he was 'at first prevented by a dangerous illness from coming at the appointed time, and afterwards by business'(*EY*, 165). They may have expected Montagu to tell them about Godwin's latest activities, in particular the recently published second edition of *Political Justice* (November 1795). Having read the second edition of *Political Justice*, Wordsworth said in a letter to Mathews of 21 March 1796

> I expect to find the work much improved. I cannot say that I have been encouraged in this hope by the perusal of the second preface, which is all I have yet looked into. Such a piece of barbarous writing I have not often seen. It contains scarce one sentence decently written. I am surprized to find such gross faults in a writer who has had so much practise in composition. (*EY*, 170-1)

Although five out of the eight books were rewritten, the second edition is regarded as 'impoverished' by Jonathan Wordsworth, who asserts that the 1793 edition that had looked forward to 'a chain reaction of beneficent revolutions (America, France, England, and onwards across the known world) now offered the rhetoric of rationalist optimist, divorced from political hope'. According to Jonathan Wordsworth, the second edition made Wordsworth '[s]ick, wearied out with contraries, /Yield up moral questions in despair'(The 1805 *Prelude*, X, 899-900).[87] I would rather suggest that as early as April 1795 Wordsworth abandoned 'all feeling of conviction'(X, 898) of Godwin's rationalism. What Wordsworth expected to find in the second edition was, I think, the influence of his discussions with Godwin about *Political Justice* in spring 1795. In his letter Wordsworth referred only to the 'gross faults' in Godwin's writing, though it seems to me that even at a glance he may not have found any marked change in Godwin's authoritative mode of reasoning.

Some three months after his reading of the second edition of *Political Justice*, Wordsworth had a meeting with Godwin in London on 7, 18, 19, and

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[86] See Evans & Pinney, p. 12. Azariah wrote to James Webbe Tobin that Coleridge had 'attentively read' the poem, and regarded it as a 'very fine poem'.
[87] *Four Texts*, pp. 640-1n.

25 June 1796. There is no detailed record or evidence to suggest that they discussed the second edition of *Political Justice* at their four meetings. I would like to propose education as a subject that they may have discussed in June 1796, for like Wordsworth, Godwin had been switching his attention from politics to education in preparing for a series of essays, entitled *The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature.* The composition began on 1 August 1796, though Godwin said in the 'Preface', '[t]he Essays are principally the result of conversations, some of them held many years ago',[88] which, I believe, included the conversations with Wordsworth in June 1796 as well as the ones in spring 1795. The 'Preface' goes into details about the 'conversations' to which Godwin owed the ideas for *The Enquirer*:

> The author has always had a passion for colloquial discussion; and, in the various opportunities that have been afforded him in different scenes of life, the result seemed frequently to be fruitful both of amusement and instruction. There is a vivacity, and, if he may be permitted to say it, a richness, in the hints struck out in conversation, that are with difficulty to attained in any other method.[89]

In the 'colloquial' discussions Godwin found that 'the cause of political reform' and 'the cause of intellectual and literary refinement' should be 'inseparably connected'.[90] It was on 1 August 1796 that Godwin began composing *The Enquirer*,[91] though by Wordsworth's visits in June he may have already formed his ideals of 'political reform' through the 'intellectual and literary refinement'[92] of the individual. In his conversations with Godwin in June 1796 Wordsworth may have noticed their shared aim, namely the progress of human improvement through the civilization of individuals.

It should be noted that since Wordsworth's departure to the West Country in August 1795 Montagu had formed a close connection with Godwin. From his conversations with Montagu Godwin may have obtained some ideas for *The Enquirer.* The fact that the first part of *The*

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88 William Godwin, *The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature* (London, 1797), ed., by Jeffrey Stern (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994), 'Preface', p. vii (hereafter referred to as *The Enquirer*).
89 Godwin, *The Enquirer*, 'Preface', p. vii.
90 Godwin. *The Enquirer*, 'Preface', p. x.
91 See Don Locke, p. 360.
92 Godwin, *The Enquirer*, 'Preface', p. x.

Enquirer is devoted to the education of children suggests that Godwin may have heard from Montagu about the Wordsworths' education of Basil. It is, therefore, likely that Godwin had a chance to discuss the education of children with Wordsworth at their meetings in June 1796. There is no record or evidence to suggest the influence of Wordsworth on *The Enquirer*. However, insisting, 'Let us never forget that our child is a being of the same nature with ourselves',[93] Godwin seems to me to have shared with Wordsworth the strong sense of continuity between the child and the adult, which he rarely showed in *Political Justice*. It was, I believe, Wordsworth who may have drawn Godwin's attention to the education of children as necessary for both 'political reform' and 'intellectual and literary refinement'.[94]

In June 1796 Godwin also shared with Wordsworth the influence of Wollstonecraft's *Letters*. Since early January 1796 Godwin had been forming 'friendship' with Wollstonecraft, which was to be melting into 'love' in August of that year.[95] In his reading of the *Letters* in late January 1796[96] and in his conversations with the author the 'hints' may have struck out as to how he could achieve 'the gradual fruit of the ripening understanding of the nation' through 'the growth of each particular soil'.[97] Just as Wollstonecraft insisted in the *Letters* that authors should 'promote inquiry and discussion, instead of making dogmatical assertions',[98] Godwin presented *The Enquirer* to the 'contemplative reader' 'not as *dicta*, but as the materials of thinking'.[99] Dealing with 'the hints of enquiry rather than actual enquiries', Godwin hoped, '[t]he utmost that was here proposed, was to give, if possible, a certain perspicuity and consistency to each detached member of enquiry'.[100] In June 1796 Wordsworth may have detected their shared interest in a method of encouraging the 'intellectual and literary refinement'[101] of the reader, despite knowing nothing about Godwin's growing affection for Wollstonecraft.

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[93] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, p. 142.
[94] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, 'Preface', p. vii.
[95] William Godwin, *Memoirs of the Author of 'The Rights of Woman'*, ed. Richard Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 258.
[96] ibid., p. 258.
[97] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, ed. Richard Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 198 (hereafter referred to as *Letters*).
[98] Wollstonecraft, *Letters*, p. 93.
[99] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, 'Preface', p. viii.
[100] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, 'Preface', pp. viii-ix.
[101] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, 'Preface', p. x.

However, there are more differences than similarities between Godwin's literary principles and Wordsworth's. For 'writing an excellent style', Godwin said, '[t]wo things are especially necessary, a flowing eloquence of language, and an exquisite propriety of diction'.[102] He insisted, '[t]he true effect of a good style is to enable us to apprehend the ideas of our author without adulteration'.[103] Here Godwin showed a contradiction in his attitude towards the reader: in the 'Preface' he asserted that *The Enquirer* aimed to encourage the reader to think and enquire, though the fact was that he expected the reader to 'apprehend' his ideas thoroughly. There is no way of knowing whether or to what extent Godwin's ideal style of literature was known to Wordsworth in June 1796. However, in his 'colloquial' conversations with Godwin Wordsworth may have recognized the difference of their means of speaking to the reader.

Since his return to Racedown Wordsworth may have been forming his ideals of the progress of human improvement through the civilization of individuals by literary means. In the meantime Dorothy played all the necessary roles for Basil's growth; mother, nurse, teacher, and friend. On 28 November 1796 Mary Hutchinson came to Racedown, and remained with the Wordsworths until 3 June 1797.[104] Dorothy and Mary most likely spent much time together discussing the education of Basil. They may have agreed that what he longed for was not only friendship but also parental affection. It seems highly likely that observing Dorothy and Mary nurturing Basil, Wordsworth became interested in the close relationship of mother and infant, which was to be one of the principal themes of his contributions to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, then of *The Prelude*. It seems possible that he may have reconsidered what he had not fully described in the revised version of *An Evening Walk* and *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, namely characters of more 'strength' than John Langhorne's war widow in *The Country Justice*.[105]

'The Baker's Cart'(composed late 1796 or spring 1797) was, I think, Wordsworth's experiment in a character of such strength as to encourage the reader to go into the inner dimensions of the sufferer. Like the encounter between the traveller and the aged man in *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, 'The Baker's Cart' begins without formal introduction:

I have seen the baker's horse,

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[102] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, p. 476.
[103] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, p. 481.
[104] See *EY*, 178n and 187n.
[105] See The *Critical Review*, n.s., 8 (July 1793), 347-8; *Cornell EW*, 303-4.

As he had been accustomed at your door,
Stop with the loaded wain, when o'er his head
Smack went the whip . . .
('The Baker's Cart', 1 - 4)

Describing a contrast between the past and the present, the narrator suggests that he is 'accustomed' to observing this scene, and simply describes what he sees near the door:

. . . you were left as if
You were not born to live, or there had been
No bread in all the land.
('The Baker's Cart', 4 - 6)

Whereas in *Adventures on Salisbury Plain* the aged soldier leans on the traveller and tells him the miseries of himself and his daughter, in 'The Baker's Cart' the '[f]ive little ones'(6) neither draw near the narrator nor speak to him. The reader may expect the narrator to accuse the government of ignoring the miseries of the starving children and to show pity for them. However, the narrator continues to relate what he sees and hears:

She saw what way my eyes
Were turned, and in a low and fearful voice
She said, 'That waggon does not care for us.'
('The Baker's Cart', 14 - 16)

The mother does not beg for bread, even though she has nothing to feed her children except a 'pitcher' of water (13). Neither does she ask the narrator to 'care for' herself and her children. Yet her involuntary resignation leads the narrator to say

The words were simple, but her look and voice
Made up their meaning, and bespoke a mind
Which being long neglected, and denied
The common food of hope, was now become
Sick and extravagant . . .
('The Baker's Cart', 17 - 21)

The mother's 'look' and 'voice' suggest to the narrator that denying the 'common food of hope'(20), the existing system of charity neglects the human value of the poor until their minds become '[s]ick and extravagant'(21).

It is certainly possible for the narrator to buy bread for the children or to give money to their mother. At the least, like the traveller in *Adventures on Salisbury Plain,* he can ask her to tell him more about their miseries. However, the narrator neither gives help to the miserable mother and her starving children nor expresses compassionate words. He concludes the observation of the poor family by suggesting that the woman has been

> . . . by strong access
> Of momentary pangs driv'n to that state
> In which all past experience melts away
> And the rebellious heart to its own will
> Fashions the laws of nature.
> ('The Baker's Cart', 21 - 25)

Like her children, the mother has been forced by long experience of denied hope to suffer in silence. Nevertheless her simple 'words', 'look', and 'voice'(17) enable the narrator to recognize 'the rebellious heart'. 'The Baker's Cart', I think, achieves Wordsworth's aim in *Salisbury Plain* to expose 'the calamities of war as they affect individuals'(*EY*, 159).

Wu suggests the influence of Wollstonecraft's *Letters* on *Adventures on Salisbury Plain.*[106] Wollstonecraft's *Letters* seems to me to be more important for the development of Wordsworth's social, moral, and psychological views since the completion of *Adventures on Salisbury Plain.* Wollstonecraft concluded the 'Appendix' to the *Letters* by insisting that 'the growth of each particular soil' would lead to 'the gradual fruit of the ripening understanding of the nation'.[107] 'The most essential service' that 'authors could render to society', she stated, was to 'promote inquiry and discussion, instead of making [the] dogmatical assertions'.[108] Like 'curiosity', the 'spirit of inquiry' would be the forerunner not only of 'a great accumulation of knowledge' but also of '[a]n ardent affection for the human race'.[109] It seems likely that Wollstonecraft's *Letters* may have convinced Wordsworth of his 'service' to 'render to society', namely the 'growth' of each reader's talents and virtue through his compositions.[110] Furthermore, it was, I think, Wollstonecraft who suggested to Wordsworth a way in which he could lead the reader to conjecture the meaning of the mother's

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106 Wu, pp. 152-3.
107 Wollstonecraft, *Letters*, p. 198.
108 Wollstonecraft, *Letters*, p. 93.
109 Wollstonecraft, *Letters*, pp. 106, 93, 198.
110 Wollstonecraft, *Letters*, p. 93.

'rebellious heart'. Roe regards the 'imaginative involution from external circumstances to inner life' in 'The Baker's Cart' as a pattern 'for Wordsworth's larger development from poet of protest to poet of human suffering'.[111] I would rather say that 'The Baker's Cart' shows Wordsworth's experiment in his method of encouraging the reader's creative involvement in a poem, and it is in this respect that we can see Wordsworth even as early as spring 1797 moving towards the ideals he proposed for *Lyrical Ballads* in spring 1798.

It was presumably soon after the completion of 'The Baker's Cart', on 15 March 1797, that Montagu at last paid his first visit to Racedown Lodge 'unexpectedly' before all the inhabitants were risen. Dorothy was glad to show the 'great improvements in Basil' to his father for the first time (*EY*, 161). Montagu most likely spent much time in his stay at Racedown from 15 to 19 March discussing the education of Basil, for soon after Montagu's departure Dorothy explained the 'system' of the education of Basil in a letter to Jane Marshall, who was considering how to educate her ten-month-old son.[112] She said, 'it is a very simple one, so simple that in this age of systems you will hardly be likely to follow it', then explained how 'simple' their system was:

> We teach him nothing at present but what he learns from the evidence of his senses. He has an insatiable curiosity which we are always careful to satisfy to the best of our ability. (*EY*, 180)

The Wordsworths drew upon a sort of 'system', though regarding it as so 'simple' as to be distinguished from the existing educational systems. Crum points out that the Wordsworths' 'simple' system derived from *Émile* in which Rousseau insisted that the mind could be developed only by the experience of the senses.[113] Although not observed by Crum, the Wordsworths' system also has a close similarity with Rousseau's 'education' which should come to children 'from nature or from men or from things':

> The internal development of our faculties and our organs is the education of nature. The use that we are taught to make of this development is the education of men. And

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[111] Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 137.
[112] See *EY*, 180n. Jane's son, William Marshall, was born on 26 May 1796.
[113] Crum, p. 35.

> what we acquire from our experience about the objects which affect us is the education of things.[114]

Like Rousseau, the Wordsworths believed that Basil could achieve the 'internal development' of his 'faculties' and his 'organs' through his 'experience'.

The subsequent passage in Dorothy's letter, however, shows disagreement with Rousseau's system. Rousseau prohibited Émile from reading any books except *Robinson Crusoe*. Wordsworth and Dorothy had 'not attempted any further step in the path of *book learning*'(*EY*, 180), though they did not utterly prohibit Basil from reading any books. Whereas Rousseau devoted himself to controlling Émile's intellectual and physical growth, Wordsworth and Dorothy aimed chiefly at making Basil '*happy*'(*EY*, 180). Moreover, Rousseau treated Émile as his pupil, but for Wordsworth and Dorothy little Basil was not only their pupil, but also their teacher, who gave them '[p]leasure' and a 'grand study' of human nature through the development of his faculties (*EY*, 160, 180). If Wordsworth's reference to *Émile* in the 'Preface' to *The Borderers* (composed in late 1796)[115] implies that he and Dorothy were familiar with Rousseau's book, their treatment of Basil clearly reflected their disapproval of some important aspects of Rousseau's system.

The Wordsworths' system of book learning seems to have been derived in part from their experience at Dame Ann Birkett's infant school. As Mary Hutchinson recollected, Ann Birkett was 'indifferent to method' in book learning, but so open-minded as to use even 'The Spectators' as a 'reading book' for the 'Children under 8 years of age'.[116] Wordsworth was more cautious about the method of book learning, but agreed with Mrs Birkett that a child's curiosity should not be controlled by adults but be satisfied by any books. Having looked after the Cooksons' infants, Dorothy may have been convinced of the significance of providing a child with anything to satisfy his 'insatiable curiosity'. The fact that Basil had already known 'his letters' suggests that Wordsworth and Dorothy, unlike Rousseau, regarded it as an advantage for a child to have any possible means of expressing himself. It was, I believe, Dorothy who convinced

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[114] Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 38.

[115] For the influence of Rousseau on the Wordsworths' system of education, see Wu, pp. 119-20.

[116] Mary Wordsworth's Memoranda of the Hutchinson and Monkhouse Families (1851), Dove Cottage MS 167 36v; her underlining, quoted from Wu, p. 131.

Wordsworth that adults should not control but encourage children to develop their individual abilities. In Dorothy's letter of 7 March 1797 there is no reference to Montagu's opinions on the Wordsworths' system of instructing Basil. However, Montagu most likely regarded the 'great improvements in Basil'(*EY*, 161) as a successful result of the Wordsworths' simple system.

From Montagu, Wordsworth most certainly heard about Godwin's latest activities, in particular *The Enquirer*, which was published in February 1797. There is no evidence or record to state whether and when Wordsworth read Godwin's *Enquirer*. However, in March 1797 Wordsworth had the opportunity of knowing much about Godwin's views on education. Having seen his son's growth, Montagu left for Bath with Wordsworth on 19 March. They visited their acquaintances in and around Bath. The most significant was the supper held on 27 March at the lodgings of James Losh, who had been forced by ill health to retire from the London radical world in 1795. On this occasion Wordsworth was introduced to John Wedgwood, the eldest son of a wealthy Quaker potter of Birmingham, and brother of Josiah and Thomas. John Wedgwood's Cote House, a mansion about two miles out of Bristol, was well-known as a 'fashionable gathering place' for 'promising young intellectuals' in the Bristol area including Coleridge, Joseph Cottle, Thomas Poole, and Thomas Beddoes.[117] Montagu had already been known to John through Josiah, who had been Wrangham's patron since he had moved to Stoke d'Abernon, near Cobham, in Surrey in 1795.[118]

At this time both Losh and Wedgwood were deeply involved in the education of children. Since 1795 Losh had contributed to Sunday Schools and Schools of Industry in the Bath-Bristol area by following Dr. Thomas Beddoes's system of education.[119] Through Dr. Beddoes Losh became acquainted with John Wedgwood, who, as a member of Dr. Beddoes's educational committee, had been planning to make a series of 'rational toys' to cultivate the senses of children since February 1796.[120] In *The Enquirer*

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[117] See R. B. Litchfield, *Tom Wedgwood: The First Photographer* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1903), p. 40 (hereafter referred to as 'Litchfield). See also Barbara and Hensleigh Wedgwood, *The Wedgwood Circle 1730-1897: Four Generations of a Family and Their Friends* (London: Studio Vista, 1980), p. 106 (hereafter referred to *The Wedgwood Circle*).

[118] See Litchfield, p. 40.

[119] See James Losh, *The Diaries and Correspondence of James Losh*, ed. Edward Hughes, 2 vols (London: vol. I, 1962, vol. II, 1963), I, p. xiii.

[120] David V. Erdman, 'Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the Wedgwood Fund', *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 60 (1956), 425-443, 487-507; p. 491 (hereafter referred to as 'Erdman')

Godwin insisted that '[i]ncidents of a certain sort' would 'produce' genius in 'early infancy' and might 'create' genius 'in a great degree even at a more advanced period'.[121] Beddoes's project was more or less under the influence of *The Enquirer*, for even before the publication of it in February 1797 Godwin's principles of creating genius had been known to his ardent advocates like Beddoes and the Wedgwood brothers through the 'conversations'.[122] Montagu, in fact, echoed Godwin's principles as early as 22 November 1796, when he asserted, 'Poets are made by *education*', at the meeting of the Trent Club.[123] On 27 March 1797 Montagu most likely asked John Wedgwood about Beddoes's projected 'rational toys' and presumably talked about Wordsworth's method of instructing his son Basil. However, as Dorothy anticipated, the Wordsworths' system was so 'simple' that in the 'age of systems' rational educationists would 'hardly be likely to follow it'(*EY*, 180). Godwinian educationists like John Wedgwood certainly disapproved of the Wordsworths' simple system.

There is no detailed record of the meeting of 27 March 1797, though it seems likely that Wordsworth may have regarded it as necessary to find a means to demonstrate the advantages of his principles of education. On his way back to Racedown Wordsworth visited Coleridge at Nether Stowey. His principal aim was, I think, to discuss with Coleridge how he could elaborate his simple system of education and how he could draw upon it for his literary works. At this time Wordsworth most likely talked about his recently completed poem, 'The Baker's Cart', in which he had tried out his method of encouraging the reader to formulate the meaning of the mother's 'rebellious heart'(24). He presumably talked about the poem, which had preoccupied him since 8 February 1797, entitled 'Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree which stands near the Lake of Esthwaite'.[124]

Like *Adventures on Salisbury Plain* and 'The Baker's Cart', the 'Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree' begins without formal introduction. The narrator speaks to the 'Traveller' passing by the 'lonely yew-tree' which 'stands /Far from all human dwelling'(1-2). Having demonstrated how

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121 Godwin, *The Enquirer*, pp. 13-4.

122 See Litchfield, p. 28. Impressed by *Political Justice*, Tom entered the Godwinian circle some time in 1793.

123 Joseph Farington, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, ed. Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre, 20 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), Vol. III September 1796 - December 1798, pp. 700-1.

124 See *Cornell LB*, 47n. The composition began as early as 1786 or 1787, but the main composition is dated by Butler and Green early in 1797, perhaps after 8 February, and by July.

'lonely' the yew-tree is, the narrator begins a tale of the man, who was as lonely as the tree:

> He was one who own'd
> No common soul. In youth, by genius nurs'd,
> And big with lofty views, he to the world
> Went forth, pure in his heart, against the taint
> Of dissolute tongues, 'gainst jealousy, and hate,
> And scorn, against all enemies prepared,
> All but neglect: and so, his spirit damped
> At once, with rash disdain he turned away,
> And with the food of pride sustained his soul
> In solitude.
>
> ('Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree', 12 - 21)

One may find some similarities between the man of '[n]o common soul' in the 'Lines' and the Wordsworth of the early 1790s. In spring 1791 Wordsworth 'to the world /[W]ent forth' with 'lofty views' of the progress of mankind. Through his experience in the British radical world and in revolutionary France Wordsworth prepared himself 'against all enemies' except Godwin's rational principles. In spring 1795 Wordsworth was nearly misguided by Godwin, but his experience of instructing Montagu enabled him to make a step out of Godwinian reason to his own ideals of the welfare of society through the happiness of individuals. Until the main composition of the 'Lines' in spring 1797 Wordsworth's political and poetic voice had been not completely neglected but rarely heard by the public. However, composing the 'Lines', Wordsworth may have become convinced that he would be not a Godwinian élitist of '[n]o common soul' keeping an eye 'ever on himself'(52) but a poet-preceptor encouraging the reader to pursue together the progress of human improvement.

The 'Lines' concludes

> O, be wiser thou!
> Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
> True dignity abides with him alone
> Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
> Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
> In lowliness of heart.
>
> ('Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree', 55 - 60)

The narrator suggests that we should be 'wiser' by feeling 'love' for both mankind and Nature. The somewhat didactic concluding lines of the

'Lines' resemble Godwin's method in *The Enquirer* of leading his audience to 'apprehend' his ideas 'without adulteration'.[125] The concluding lines of the 'Lines' suggest that although having distinguished his aim of education from Godwin's, Wordsworth had not yet found a means to distinguish his method of speaking to the reader from Godwin's authoritarian mode of indoctrination. There is no way of knowing whether and to what extent the 'Lines' was known to Coleridge during Wordsworth's stay at Nether Stowey in April 1797. However, it seems to me highly likely that Wordsworth discussed with Coleridge a way in which he could civilize the reader. Some ideas seem to have found their ways into 'Old Man Travelling', which Wordsworth began in April, presumably soon after his stay with Coleridge, and completed in June 1797.

Like *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, 'Old Man Travelling' begins with a description of an old man on a road:

> He travels on, and in his face, his step,
> His gait, is one expression; every limb,
> His look and bending figure, all bespeak
> A man who does not move with pain, but moves
> With thought . . .
> ('Old Man Travelling', 3 - 7)

Whereas the aged soldier in *Adventures on Salisbury Plain* has 'crept with pain'(3), the old man, whose 'bending figure' moves not with 'pain' but with 'thought', seems to be not a human being but part of Nature. Just as the mother and her children in 'The Baker's Cart' endure distresses in silence, the old man's perfect peace and tranquillity represent his 'effort' and '[l]ong patience'('Old Man Travelling', 9-10). However, whereas the mother's 'rebellious' heart fashions 'the laws of nature' to 'its own will'('The Baker's Cart', 24-5), the old man's mind is not '[s]ick and extravagant'('The Baker's Cart', 21) but so 'insensible' as to be subdued to complete harmony with Nature.

In 'The Baker's Cart' the narrator notices that the mother and her children require the 'common food of hope'('The Baker's Cart', 20). In 'Old Man Travelling' the young man beholds the old man's tranquillity '[w]ith envy', and begins to ask him 'whither he [is] bound' and what is '[t]he object of his journey'(14-6). The old man replies

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[125] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, p. 481.

"Sir! I am going many miles to take
"A last leave of my son, a mariner,
"Who from a sea-fight has been brought to Falmouth,
"And there is dying in an hospital."
('Old Man Travelling', 17 - 20)

The object of his journey is much the same as the aged soldier's in *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*: which is to see his daughter, who is more 'wretched' than her 'wretched' father.[126] However, whereas in *Adventures on Salisbury Plain* the aged soldier's heart is 'riven /At the bare thought',[127] the old man is so tranquil even when he talks about his dying son. The poem concludes without describing how the narrator feels, what exactly he says to the old man, or what he does for him. However, the simple description of the old man's tranquil appearance and the unadorned story of his calm endurance have a calculated purpose: whereas in 'The Baker's Cart' the miserable mother, '[l]ong neglected'(19) by society, is obliged to endure miseries and distresses with '[s]ick and extravagant' heart (21), the old man's heart is calm and tranquil fitting itself to the 'insensible' processes, which are described in 'The Baker's Cart' as 'the laws of nature'(25). The strange patience of 'Old Man Travelling' seems to give definition to and evidence of 'the laws of nature' which is violated in 'The Baker's Cart'.

When 'Old Man Travelling' was published in the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads* in September 1798, Wordsworth's overt protest was remarked by Dr. Burney. In the *Monthly Review* Dr. Burney said that the old man's story of his dying son was

> . . . finely drawn, but the termination seems pointed against the war; from which, however, we are now no more able to separate ourselves, than Hercules was to free himself Nessus . . .

Although expressed in terms of myth, Dr. Burney's review concluded by suggesting that 'The old traveller's son might have died by disease'.[128] It was popular at this time to express protest against war by describing the miseries of war victims dying in hospitals of wounds or diseases. In this respect 'Old Man Travelling' seems to have been related to protest poetry. Yet Dr. Burney seems to have recognized that the old man's simple story

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[126] *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, 23-7.
[127] *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, 25-6.
[128] The *Monthly Review*, xxix (June, 1799); quoted from *LB* (Brett and Jones), p. 323.

was so 'finely drawn' as to lead himself and contemporary readers to seek meaning beyond the present social problems. In 'Old Man Travelling' Wordsworth, I believe, went much further than documenting human suffering. By the completion of 'Old Man Travelling' in June 1797 Wordsworth had begun to consider a complex and distinctive vision of Nature, Man, and Society, which was to be the core of his 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* poems and also the principal theme of *The Recluse or views of Nature, Man, and Society.*

On 5 June 1797 Coleridge paid his first visit to Racedown Lodge and spent a month with the Wordsworths. Three days later, on 8 June, Coleridge said in a letter to Cottle that Wordsworth's drama, entitled *The Borderers,* showed him such '*profound* touches of the human heart' as to lead him to feel '*a little man* by his side'(*CL,* I, 325). On 10 June Coleridge wrote to John Prior Estlin about the 'great man' Wordsworth (*CL,* I, 327). During his stay at Racedown Coleridge most certainly found other '*profound* touches of the human heart' in Wordsworth's poetic works, and became more attracted to his greatness both as a poet and as a man. Encouraged by Coleridge's appreciation, Wordsworth became convinced of the significance of a regular contact with the person who could encourage the development of his literary principles. On 4 July the Wordsworths followed Coleridge to Nether Stowey, and decided to move into Alfoxden House. Wordsworth concluded his Racedown period without finding 'a way of getting a more permanent establishment'(*EY,* 150), but his ideals of education were remarked upon by a considerable number of intellectual figures including Godwin. It was in September 1798 that Wordsworth presented to the public his experiments in the progress of human improvement through the enlightenment of the individual under the title of *Lyrical Ballads.* However, by the conclusion of his Racedown period Wordsworth, I believe, had already been convinced of his duty as a poet-preceptor who could lead the reader in pursuit of the progress of human improvement as well as the growth of his mind and heart.

4. The Poet-Preceptor in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*: July 1797 - September 1798

4. 1. Discussions of Education

On 13 July 1797 Wordsworth, Dorothy, and little Basil moved into Alfoxden House in Somerset. Seven years previously, on 13 July 1790, Wordsworth and his Cambridge friend Robert Jones landed at Calais and began their tour through revolutionary France and the Alps. On 13 July 1793 he accompanied his Hawkshead school-fellow of inherited wealth William Calvert to Tintern Abbey. Now Wordsworth settled in Alfoxden, and had a man of literary talents and enthusiasm for the progress of human improvement, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, only three miles away at Nether Stowey. Having received from Coleridge stimulation, encouragement, and ideas for his poems in the last months, Wordsworth most certainly hoped that he would be helped by Coleridge to develop his ideals of the progress of human improvement through the enlightenment of the individual by means of poetry. And Coleridge was so glad to have 'the greatest Man' and poet of '*profound* touches of the human heart'(*CL*, I, 325) in his neighbourhood as to exclaim in a letter of 17 July to his ex-fellow Pantisocrat and brother-in-law Robert Southey, 'Wordsworth is a very great man - the only man, to whom *at all times* & in *all modes of excellence* I feel myself inferior - the only one, I mean, whom I *have yet met with* -'(*CL*, I, 334).

On 17 July, when writing to Southey about the 'very great' Wordsworth, Coleridge was visited by the one-time leading radical reformist John Thelwall, who was then looking for a place to settle with his family. Just as Coleridge moved into Nether Stowey in December 1796 in the hope that his new-born son Hartley 'should be bred up from earliest infancy in the simplicity of peasants',[1] Thelwall planned to bring up his infant son in the country. On the next day Thelwall and Coleridge discussed a way in which the adult should educate the child:

> Thelwall thought it very unfair to prejudice a child's mind by inculcating any opinions before it should have come to years of discretion and be able to choose for itself. I showed him my garden and told him it was my botanical garden. "How so?" said he - "it is covered with nothing but weeds." "O" I replied - "that is only because it has not yet come to its age of discretion and choice. The weeds, you see, have taken the liberty to grow, and I

[1] *CL*, I, 240. See also *CL*, I, 236. David Hartley Coleridge was born on 19 September 1796.

> thought it unfair in me to prejudice the soil towards roses or strawberries."[2]

Both Coleridge and Thelwall disagreed with Rousseau, who insisted in *Émile* that a preceptor should carefully arrange the environment fitted for a child before his age of 'discretion' and 'choice'. However, while Thelwall regarded it as 'very unfair' to provide the child with any instruction, Coleridge thought that the adult should not control but supervise the growth of the child's mind and heart. Coleridge's method resembles the Wordsworths' 'simple' system, which aimed neither to control Basil's behaviour nor to leave him entirely voluntary but to satisfy his 'insatiable curiosity' by enabling him to learn 'from the evidence of his senses'(*EY*, 180). Having stayed at Racedown for the month from 5 June to 4 July 1797, Coleridge had found the chance to observe the Wordsworths' method of instructing the four-and-a-half-year-old Basil. Soon after their discussion Coleridge brought Thelwall to Alfoxden House. There is no detailed record of what was discussed by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Thelwall at Alfoxden on 18 July. However, their shared interest in the education of the child suggests that one of the principal topics was a way in which the adult should educate the child.

Thelwall's views of education had already been known to Wordsworth through his reading of the 'Politico-Sentimental Journals', entitled *The Peripatetic* (published April 1793).[3] Through the three volumes of *The Peripatetic* Thelwall insists that a child should be educated to be 'a better member of society', though his means is not Godwinian reason but 'affection'.[4] The existing system appears to Thelwall to provide children with an 'improper' education:

> The tutors of the present day, instead of exciting to emulation by instructive discourse, and calling forth the powers of the infant mind by familiar interrogation, sit retired in haughty silence . . . singling with cowering look, the unhappy objects of chastisement, who . . . are doomed

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[2] *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, General ed. Kathleen Coburn (Bollingen Series 75; New Jersey), XIV, *Table Talk*, ed. Carl Woodring, 2 vols (1990), I, 181, entry for 24 July 1830. This episode is dated 18 July 1797.

[3] See Wu, p. 136.

[4] See John Thelwall, *The Peripatetic: Sketches of the Heart, of Nature and Society; in a Series of Politico-Sentimental Journals, in Verse and Prose, of the Eccentric Excursions of Sylvanus Theophrastus* (3 vols; London, 1793), ed. Donald H. Reiman, 2 vols (New York: Garland, 1978), II, 15-9 (hereafter referred to as *The Peripatetic*).

> to acquire many things from the tedious drudgery of reiterated perusal . . . (*The Peripatetic*, III, 43)

In the late eighteenth century most of the public schools were in as debased a condition as described in the passage above. James Bowen discusses an example of what Thelwall calls 'improper' education:

> classes were often conducted in one large hall by several masters simultaneously, the dominant teaching method being the recitation, the endless repeating of lines. (Bowen, pp. 166 - 7)

In addition, as Thelwall says, 'physical violence' like 'flogging' was 'an integral part of the school scene' in the eighteenth century (Bowen, p. 167).

Thelwall's ideal method of education is narrated by one of the characters, named Wentworth, as a recollection of 'an act of gratitude and justice to one mental benefactor', named Hervey, who was 'a young unbeneficed clergyman, of gay and familiar manners, intelligent mind, and engaging conversation'(*The Peripatetic*, III, 41-2). This tutor treated boys not as pupils but as friends, and cultivated 'the vivid energies of eloquence and imagination' by offering them a colloquial mode of instruction (43-4). In doing so, he aimed at 'discovering, and encouraging the particular bias of every genius'(42). It should be noted that Thelwall formed his ideal method by referring to his own schooldays at Highgate. In the 'Memoir' of 1801 Thelwall recollects his tutor 'Harvey'. Like 'Hervey' in *The Peripatetic*, this 'young clergyman' taught Thelwall in the 'colloquial mode of instruction':

> He made himself the conversational companion, not the austere dictator, of the youths committed to his care; and, remarkably lax in every thing that looked like scholastic discipline, directed his attention rather to multiplying the ideas, than cramping the limbs or overawing the faculties of his pupil.[5]

Harvey's mode of instruction resembles the Hawkshead's method, which, unlike the 'scholastic discipline' of most of the public and grammar schools, aimed to encourage each pupil to achieve his potential. Just as Thelwall

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[5] John Thelwall, *Poems Chiefly Written in Retirement* (Hereford, 1801), 'Prefatory Memoir', p. vi.

referred to Harvey's instruction for his discussion of education in *The Peripatetic,* Wordsworth drew upon his experience at Hawkshead for the instruction of Basil. Thelwall's ideal method of education displays more marked similarities with Coleridge's method of instructing his private pupil Charles Lloyd, the twenty-year-old son of a wealthy Quaker banker of Birmingham. In June 1796, three months before the commencement of his tuition of Charles, Coleridge said in a letter to Thelwall, *The Peripatetic* 'let me into *your heart'*(*CL*, I, 221). It seems likely that Coleridge may have consulted *The Peripatetic* when aiming to be a tutor of 'congenial' mind, who tried out a colloquial mode of instruction in encouraging Charles to express his 'Feelings' and enabling him to find what his 'great Genius' would be for.[6] During his stay at Nether Stowey and Alfoxden in 17 - 27 July 1797 Thelwall most likely had the chance to exchange opinions with Wordsworth and Coleridge on the advantages of the 'colloquial mode of instruction'.

As another possible subject discussed by the three, I would like to point out Godwin's views of education and literature in *The Enquirer*. As Godwin says in the 'Preface', *The Enquirer* owes much to the conversations with his friends, which most likely include Thelwall and Wordsworth. Thelwall's contribution to *The Enquirer* seems to me to be more significant than Wordsworth's or any other friends', for there are some marked similarities between *The Peripatetic* and *The Enquirer*. For instance, Godwin agrees with Thelwall that the adult should encourage children 'to state their reason, and proceed to a fair and equal examination of the subject' even when 'they differ in opinion with [him] as to the conduct they ought to pursue'.[7] The liberal method of Thelwall's and Godwin's was, in fact, common to the dissenters and radicals in this period. However, their close connection in 1793 - 4 makes one regard the similarities of their educational ideals as the result of their conversations. Furthermore, it was in July 1796, a few weeks before the composition of *The Enquirer,* that Godwin was reconciled with Thelwall.[8] It seems likely that for his essays on education Godwin may have referred to *The Peripatetic* as well as to his conversations with Thelwall. There is no record to suggest that Thelwall had read *The Enquirer* by his visit to the West Country in July 1797, though he presumably knew most of Godwin's views on education and literature. If Thelwall discussed Godwin's *Enquirer* with Wordsworth and Coleridge, he most

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[6] See *CL*, I, 236-7.
[7] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, p. 94.
[8] See Don Locke, p. 104.

likely became aware of a contradiction between Godwin's insistence on a liberal method of instruction in the first part and his authoritarian attitude towards the reader in the second part. Even if Thelwall went no further than a general discussion of Godwin's educational theory, he presumably regarded Wordsworth's and Coleridge's principles not only as more practical but also as more suitable for the enlightenment of the individual.

Having concluded his stay at Nether Stowey and Alfoxden, Thelwall composed the 'Lines, written at Bridgewater, in Somersetshire, on the 27th of July, 1797; during a long excursion, in quest of a peaceful retreat'. He described how he and Coleridge would educate their sons:

> . . . 'twould be sweet, my Samuel, ah! most sweet
> To see our little infants stretch their limbs
> In gambols unrestrain'd, and early learn
> Practical love, and, Wisdom's noblest lore,
> Fraternal kindliness . . . [9]

Saying that children should not be left entirely voluntary but instructed with 'Wisdom' and 'love', Thelwall seems to have approved of the Wordsworths' system of fostering Basil as well as of Coleridge's insistence that it was not 'unfair' to supervise the growth of a child's mind and heart before his age of 'discretion' and 'choice'.[10] And, if Coleridge agreed with Thelwall's idea of including their sons in the ideal community, he may have changed his principles that children could not be viable members of Pantisocracy.[11] Thelwall rarely referred to the 'Alfoxden's musing tenant'('Bridgewater', 123) Wordsworth in the 'Lines', and Coleridge left no record of Wordsworth's contribution to the discussions of 17 - 27 July 1797. However, it is certain that both Thelwall and Coleridge agreed with the Wordsworths' simple system of fostering Basil. And it is likely that Wordsworth may have gained some ideas from his discussions with Thelwall and Coleridge not only for his education of Basil but also for his literary principles, in particular to his attitude towards the reader.

On his way from Somerset Thelwall became anxious to conclude his 'long excursion, in quest of a peaceful retreat' by settling with his family at

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[9] John Thelwall, 'Lines, written at Bridgewater, in Somersetshire, on the 27th of July, 1797; during a long excursion, in quest of a peaceful retreat' (published in *Poems, Chiefly Written in Retirement;* Hereford, 1801), 107-111.

[10] See Coleridge, *Table Talk*, I, 181.

[11] See *CL*, I, 119-20. In a letter to Southey of 23 October 1794 Coleridge rejected Southey's suggestion of including some children in their scheme by insisting on their immature rational abilities and moral virtue.

Nether Stowey. He devoted most part of the 'Lines, written at Bridgewater' to illustrating an ideal community of Stowey:

> Ah! 'twould be sweet, beneath the neighb'ring thatch,
> In philosophic amity to dwell,
> Inditing moral verse, or tale, or theme,
> Gay or instructive; and it would be sweet,
> With kindly interchange of mutual aid,
> To delve our little garden plots, the while
> Sweet converse flow'd, suspending oft the arm
> And half-driven spade, while, eager, one propounds,
> And listens one, weighing each pregnant word,
> And pondering fit reply, that may unwist
> The knotty point - perchance, of import high -
> Of Moral Truth, of Causes Infinite,
> Creating Power! or Uncreated Worlds
> Eternal and uncaus'd! or whatsoe'er,
> Of Metaphysic, or of Ethic lore,
> The mind, with curious subtilty, pursues -
> Agreeing, or dissenting - sweet alike,
> When wisdom, and not victory, the end.
> ('Lines, written at Bridgewater', 89-106)

Thelwall's ideal community had much the same end as Coleridge's Pantisocracy, namely the 'improvement' of each member's 'Head and Heart'.[12] In addition, both Thelwall and Coleridge hoped to develop their literary talents by means of colloquial discussions. However, it was not long after Thelwall's departure that his stay with Wordsworth and Coleridge was reported by a government spy James Walsh as the meeting of 'a mischiefuous gang of disaffected Englishmen'.[13] Collecting the information about Thelwall's activities at Nether Stowey and Alfoxden, Walsh reminded the local people of his fame as 'a most Violent Member of the Corresponding Society'.[14] Consequently, Thelwall was forced to abandon his plan to dwell in 'philosophic amity'('Lines', 90) at Nether Stowey with Coleridge. It was Wordsworth who began '[i]nditing moral verse, or tale, or theme,/ Gay or instructive'(91-2) with Coleridge. Whereas Thelwall aimed only at the happiness of his and Coleridge's families, Wordsworth had been thinking of

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[12] See *CL*, I, 119.

[13] James Walsh to John King, 15 August 1797, Home Office files 42/41 at the Public Record Office, London; quoted from Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 258. For more about the 'Spy Nozy' incident following Thelwall's visit to Nether Stowey and Alfoxden, see Roe, *Radical Years*, pp. 248-262.

[14] Home Office files 42/41; quoted from Roe, *Radical Years*, p. 260.

a way in which he could contribute to social welfare by means of poetry since the revision of *An Evening Walk* in spring 1794. 'With kindly interchange of mutual aid'(93), Wordsworth and Coleridge embarked on an ambitious literary scheme for the progress of human improvement after Thelwall's departure.

On 14 September Wordsworth and Coleridge were visited by Tom Wedgwood and James Webb Tobin. Tom's eldest brother John Wedgwood lived at Cote House, a country house about two miles out of Bristol, which was a 'fashionable gathering place' for 'promising young intellectuals', and among them were Coleridge, Joseph Cottle, Thomas Poole, Basil Montagu, and Thomas Beddoes.[15] Although having not yet met Coleridge, Tom had already heard about him from his brother and friends.[16] The private tuition of Charles Lloyd was perhaps discussed at Cote House, for it was based on Beddoes's 'philosophical' advice to both Coleridge and Lloyd, Senior.[17] Tom had not yet seen Wordsworth, either, but, as Erdman says, he may well have heard from his brother and Montagu of Wordsworth's education of Basil.[18] There was another link figure, James Webbe Tobin, the son of John Pretor Pinney's business partner, who was presumably introduced to Wordsworth by Azariah as early as spring 1796.[19] Chard suggests that Tobin became friends with Coleridge and Wordsworth through the group of Bristol liberals in 1797-8.[20] It was presumably through this group of Bristol liberals that Tobin became acquainted with John and Tom Wedgwood.

The principal aim of Tom Wedgwood's visit to Alfoxden and Nether Stowey in September 1797 was to discuss the education of children with Wordsworth and Coleridge. Three months previously, in June 1797, Montagu and Godwin spent two weeks with Tom Wedgwood and his elder

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[15] See Litchfield, p. 40. See also Barbara and Hensleigh Wedgwood, *The Wedgwood Circle*, p. 106.

[16] See Litchfield, pp. 49, 51. Litchfield regards Tom Poole as the most active link figure between the Wedgwoods and Coleridge and Wordsworth.

[17] See *CL*, I, 256. In his letter of 14 November 1796 Coleridge said to Charles's father, '[Dr. Beddoes] is a *philosopher*, and the knowledge of mind is essentially requisite in order to the well-treating of your Son's distemper'. See also *The Wedgwood Circle*, pp. 109-10. Josiah Wedgwood, the second of the Wedgwood brothers, had known both Charles and his father since 1788.

[18] See Erdman, pp. 429, 434.

[19] See Evans & Pinney, p. 4. The possible first meeting of Wordsworth and Tobin is dated as early as the beginning of 1796, since Azariah said in his letter to Wordsworth of November 1795 that Tobin was planning to go to London with John Pinney and Wordsworth.

[20] Leslie F. Chard II., *Dissenting Republican: Wordsworth's Early Life and Thought in Their Political Context* (The Hague: Maulton, 1972), p. 231.

brother Josiah at Etruria discussing a way in which they could promote the enlightenment of society. On 31 July Tom wrote to Godwin about a scheme for a 'practical nursery of genius' aiming to 'anticipate a century or two upon the large-paced progress of human improvement'.[21] For this scheme Tom was planning to draw upon his study of the relationship between sensation, perception, and emotion, which was based on the subjective study of his own sensations, and the objective study of the behaviour of Josiah's children.[22]

By September 1797 the Wedgwoods had already consulted Godwin and some other 'philosophers'.[23] Beddoes agreed to provide them with textbooks consisting of a progressive series of information.[24] Now the Wedgwoods were looking for '[o]ne, or two superintendents of the practical part', and, as Tom said in a letter to Godwin of 31 July 1797, Wordsworth and Coleridge might be the most likely 'superintendents' for the projected nursery.[25] During his stay at Alfoxden and Nether Stowey in 14 - 18 September, Tom intended to examine whether both Wordsworth and Coleridge, or either of them, would be suited for the scheme. It was, however, not long before Tom disapproved of Wordsworth's 'very simple' system of leaving Basil to 'the evidence of senses'(*EY*, 180). For Tom Nature was nothing but 'a chaos of perceptions', so the child's sensory responses should be developed in a 'nursery [with] plain grey walls with one or two vivid objects for sight & touch', all contact with Nature would be forbidden, and 'the child must never go out of doors or leave his own apartment'.[26] The Wedgwoods' scheme would require a more strict control and a more careful arrangement by adults of the child's environment than Rousseau's education of Émile. To develop 'genius' Tom proposed a series of progressively arranged 'DISTINCT VIVID' sensations ('primary ideas') which would cause 'DISTINCT VIVID' impressions ('secondary ideas').[27] For the Wedgwoods' highly systematic scheme Wordsworth would hardly be suited.

It was not only Wordsworth but also Godwin that disapproved of the Wedgwoods' strict control. In *The Enquirer* Godwin suggested to

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[21] Tom Wedgwood to Godwin, 31 July 1797; quoted from Erdman, p. 430.
[22] See *The Wedgwood Circle*, p. 110.
[23] See Tom Wedgwood to Godwin, 31 July 1797; Erdman, p. 430.
[24] See Erdman, p. 491.
[25] Tom Wedgwood to Godwin, 31 July 1797; Erdman, p. 431.
[26] Tom Wedgwood to Godwin, 31 July 1797; Erdman, p. 431.
[27] Tom Wedgwood to Godwin, 31 July 1797; Erdman, p. 431.

preceptors, 'The state of equality', which is 'the consummation of a just education', 'should for ever be borne in mind':

> We should behold [our children's] proceedings with the eyes of men towards men, that they may learn to feel their portion of importance, and regard their actions as the actions of moral and intelligent beings.[28]

In the second part of *The Enquirer* Godwin showed a somewhat authoritarian attitude towards the reader in saying, '[t]he true effect of a good style is to enable us to apprehend the ideas of our author without adulteration'.[29] However, since Wollstonecraft's death in September 1797 Godwin may have become aware of the significance of a liberal method of instruction for the education of children through his experience of nurturing his motherless infant daughter Mary. The Wedgwoods abandoned their scheme not long after September 1797. As William St Clair says, Godwin and other members of the Philomathean Society may have suggested to Tom that authoritarian training methods were unsuitable for the encouragement of liberal intellectual individualism.[30] It seems likely to me that Godwin may have suggested to the Wedgwoods that their scheme would hardly enable children to achieve their potential.

Tom Wedgwood's visit to Alfoxden was, I think, a turning point in Wordsworth's views of education. Soon after Tom's departure Wordsworth expressed a powerful attack on distorted education in poetic terms:

> There are who tell us that in recent times
> We have been great discoverers, that by dint
> Of nice experience we have lately given
> To education principles as fixed
> And plain as those of a mechanic trade.
> . . . it is maintained
> We now have rules and theories so precise
> That by th' inspection of unwearied eyes
> We can secure infallible results.[31]

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[28] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, p. 118.
[29] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, p. 481.
[30] St Clair, pp. 91-2, 100.
[31] DC MS. 16; quoted from Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 448-9.

Disapproving of a 'mechanic' system of education like the Wedgwoods', Wordsworth tried to secure equally 'infallible results' in a more liberal way of education. It was, I think, through his discussions with Thelwall and Coleridge in July 1797 that Wordsworth regarded a liberal way of teaching as the most effective method of education. In September 1797 his contact with the Wedgwoods' scheme made Wordsworth's 'rules and theories' so 'precise' as to enable him to embark on the scheme for the progress of human improvement by means of the poems containing 'a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents'.[32] Furthermore, Wordsworth most likely began to focus on the educational effect of Nature. Erdman insists on the significance of Tom Wedgwood's visit to Alfoxden by calling Wordsworth's compositions of 1798 - 9 the 'direct attack on such grand improvements in Education as Wedgwood and Beddoes were advocating'.[33] Chandler disagrees with Erdman, who seems to slight the role of 'the period's most widely influential book on education', namely Rousseau's *Émile*.[34] Both Erdman and Chandler seem to me to belittle the role of Basil and Dorothy, who convinced Wordsworth of the ill-effects of both a highly systematic educational scheme and a Rousseavian control of children's development under the name of natural education. Even as early as spring 1797 Wordsworth, I think, expressed his disapproval of Godwinian rational principles of education and of Rousseau's method of educating a sole pupil in the 'Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree', though drawing upon teaching as didactic as Godwin's and Rousseau's. I would like to suggest that the significance of Tom's visit to Alfoxden lies in Wordsworth's conviction of the utility of his simple 'rules and theories' of education for his literary works.

After Tom Wedgwood's visit Wordsworth may have begun to consider a way in which he could draw upon his own educational principles for his literary works. In the meantime Coleridge was preoccupied with 'a project of Tuition' with Montagu. In a letter of late December 1797 Coleridge said that as 'Managing students' he and Montagu 'proposed in three years to go systematically, yet with constant reference to the nature of *man*'(*CL*, I, 361). Erdman asserts that Coleridge most likely intended to receive the Wedgwoods' annuity by presenting the 'modification' of their abandoned scheme for a nursery:

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[32] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[33] Erdman, p. 493.
[34] Chandler, pp. 95, 97.

> Skipping over the tutelage of pre-literate infancy, Coleridge and Montagu were willing as men of talent and zeal to apply systematic study to systematic knowledge for the large-paced progress of human improvement.[35]

However, as Coleridge said in his letter, he and Montagu aimed not to be such authoritarian superintendents as was projected by the Wedgwoods but had 'Managing students' as their objective. Coleridge's attitude to pupils, I think, owed more to his experience of the tuition of Charles Lloyd and his discussions with Wordsworth and Dorothy. In addition, Coleridge's discussion with Thelwall of 18 July 1797 suggests even without reference to the 'tutelage of pre-literate infancy', Coleridge most likely regarded the 'progress of human improvement' as a progressive process, for which the benevolent influences of Nature were necessary.[36] In fact, in January 1798 Coleridge accepted the Wedgwoods' annuity, but what he devoted the next half a year to was a collaborative poetic work for the 'progress of human improvement' with Wordsworth. In his abandoned school scheme Coleridge may have found an idea that in their future composition he and Wordsworth would not be Godwinian superintendents inculcating knowledge in the reader but would be 'Managing students' encouraging the progress of the reader's mind and heart.

4. 2. Poetic Experiments in Education

By 5 March 1798 the Wordsworths had decided to move out of Alfoxden House at Midsummer.[37] On 6 March Coleridge came to Alfoxden House to discuss with Wordsworth a plan to study in Germany.[38] On his arrival Coleridge may have found a more significant subject to discuss, namely Wordsworth's project for a poem containing 'the pictures of Nature, Man, and Society'.[39] On the next day, having read the completed part of Wordsworth's poem, Coleridge exclaimed in a letter to Cottle

> The Giant Wordsworth - God love him! - even when I speak in terms of admiration due to his intellect, I fear lest

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[35] Erdman, p. 438.
[36] See Coleridge, *Table Talk*, I, 181.
[37] See *EY*, 199. Dorothy to Mary Hutchinson, 5 March 1798.
[38] See *EY*, 213. Wordsworth to James Losh, 11 March 1798.
[39] *EY*, 212. Wordsworth to James Webb Tobin, 6 March 1798.

> tho[se] terms should keep out of sight the amiableness of his manners - he has written 1200 lines of a blank verse, superior, I hesitate not to aver, to any thing in our language which any way resembles it. (*CL*, I, 391)

Although not mentioned by Coleridge, it seems explicable that what had enabled Wordsworth to develop his 'intellect' and 'manners' since July 1797 were his discussions with Coleridge and his meetings with Thelwall and Tom Wedgwood. Encouraged by Coleridge's 'admiration', Wordsworth wrote to James Losh on 11 March about his projected poem:

> I have written 1300 lines of a poem which I hope to make of considerable utility; its title will be *The Recluse or views of Nature, Man, and Society*. (*EY*, 214)

This is the first announcement of the full title of *The Recluse*, but not the beginning of the main composition of it. What preoccupied Wordsworth for the next half a year was the composition of his contributions to *Lyrical Ballads*.

In his recent essay Kenneth R. Johnston points out the close connection between *The Recluse* and the 'Preface' to the two-volume edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (published January 1801):

> The key terms of *The Recluse* - 'On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life' - are present in the central formulations of the 'Preface', when Wordsworth refers to 'the most valuable object of all writing whether in prose or verse, the great and universal passions of men [Man], the most general and interesting of their occupations [Society], and the entire world of nature [Nature]'.[40]

It seems to me that the key terms of *The Recluse* - 'On Man, Nature, and Society' - are present in the central formulation of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, for Wordsworth says in the 'Advertisement' that each poem is expected to show readers a 'natural delineation of human passions [Man], human character [the influence of Nature on Man], and human incidents [Society]'.[41] In addition, I would like to point out the fact that thirteen of Wordsworth's

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[40] Kenneth R. Johnston, 'Wordsworth's Self-Creation and the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*', in *1800: The New Lyrical Ballads*, eds. by Nicola Trott and Seamus Perry (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 95-122; p. 112. The 'Preface' is quoted by Johnston from *Pr. W.* I, 144.
[41] The 'Advertisement', 739.

twenty contributions to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* were composed in the three months from his announcement of *The Recluse* to his moving out of Alfoxden House in mid June 1798. In this sense, Wordsworth's contributions to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* can be regarded as his first experiments in *The Recluse or views of Nature, Man, and Society*.

The projected 'utility' of *The Recluse* seems to be demonstrated to the public in the 'Advertisement' to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, which Wordsworth wrote after the completion of all of his contributions and added to the volume in the process of printing.[42] Most ideas in the 'Advertisement', I believe, had already been in Wordsworth's mind as early as March 1798, when he began composing most of his contributions to the volume. The 'Advertisement' begins by stating, 'It is the honourable characteristic of Poetry that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind'.[43] In the late 1790s such a subject was not exclusive to *Lyrical Ballads* but common to magazines and periodicals. Wordsworth is so fully aware of the contemporaneity of his poems as to say that the 'honourable characteristic of Poetry' should be sought not only in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* but also in the 'writings' of 'Poets'.[44]

As the novelty of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* Heather Glen points out Wordsworth's attitude towards the reader. The 'magazine poet', she says, seeks to 'share his thoughts and feelings' with the reader by presenting a subject-matter 'within the accepted and acceptable mould' of a 'shared framework of polite "common sense"'.[45] The Wordsworth of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, on the other hand, puts the reader into an awareness of the distortions involved in the easy superficiality of the magazine verse and of the inadequacy of the ways of thinking and feeling it expressed' by 'refusing to present this expected subject-matter in easily digestible form'.[46] Whereas the magazine poet expects the reader's 'passive acceptance of a finished literary product', Wordsworth requires the reader's 'creative engagement with that which is suggestively unresolved'.[47] I would like to add that the Wordsworth of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* is convinced of the reader's ability to go beyond the 'pre-established codes of decision' to his own aesthetic and ethical code, for he agrees with Sir Joshua Reynolds that '[a]n accurate taste

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[42] See D. F. Foxton, 'The Printing of *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798', *Library*, 9 (1954), 224-5.
[43] The 'Advertisement', 738.
[44] The 'Advertisement', 738.
[45] Glen, pp. 35, 48-9.
[46] Glen, pp. 44-5.
[47] Glen, p. 54.

in poetry' is 'an acquired talent, which can only be produced by severe thought, and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition'.[48]

The educational purposes of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* are remarked upon by Marilyn Butler, who calls the Wordsworth of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* 'a true son of the Enlightenment', who has 'the Neoclassical artist's fresh sense of addressing a whole public' and places 'rational thought, moral intention and social utility above the subjective, emotional side of the mind, and above the claims of self-expression'.[49] James K. Chandler also discusses the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* as an Enlightenment production, in which 'educational schemes and political schemes went hand in hand, and the systematic education associated with the name of Rousseau had a well-established political meaning'.[50] Both Butler and Chandler seem to regard the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* as the continuation of Wordsworth's 'political' scheme for the enlightenment of 'a whole public' by means of a periodical, entitled *The Philanthropist*, which was based on Godwin's 'systematic' educational principles in *Political Justice*. I would rather say that Wordsworth may have gained some ideas for the 'Advertisement' from Godwin's 'Preface' to *The Enquirer*, which he most likely knew through his conversations with the author and some mutual friends like Thelwall and Montagu. Just as Godwin says that *The Enquirer* is presented to the 'contemplative reader' as neither '*dicta*' nor 'actual enquiries' but as 'the materials of thinking' and 'the hints of enquiry',[51] Wordsworth advocates that both experienced and inexperienced readers judge each poem without the 'pre-established codes of decision'.[52] Godwin hopes to give 'a certain perspicuity and consistency to each detached member of enquiry'.[53] Wordsworth also intends to enable and encourage each reader to acquire an 'accurate taste in poetry' by 'severe thought, and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition'.[54] There is, however, a marked difference in their attitudes towards the reader. Whereas Wordsworth does not mention what the reader is expected to find in each poem, Godwin echoes his ideals in *Political Justice* in insisting that the reader

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[48] The 'Advertisement', 739.

[49] Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background, 1760-1830* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 58-60.

[50] Chandler, p. 97.

[51] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, p. viii.

[52] The 'Advertisement', 739.

[53] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, pp. viii-ix.

[54] The 'Advertisement', 739.

should acquire 'kindness', 'universal philanthropy', and 'justice'.[55] If Wordsworth refers to Godwin's 'Preface' to *The Enquirer* for the 'Advertisement', he seems to intend to demonstrate how *Lyrical Ballads* differs from the 'pre-established codes of decision' formed by Godwin's persisting ideals of philanthropy and justice. In July 1797 Wordsworth concluded his last composition of his Racedown period, the 'Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree', with a somewhat Godwinian authoritarian indoctrination. By the main composition of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* in March 1798 Wordsworth, I believe, had already formed his original method of encouraging the readers of all social classes to pursue the progress of human improvement with their own aesthetic and ethical codes.

As a marked example of Wordsworth's method of encouraging the readers' interpretation of a poem in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, a number of critics have focused on the 'Lines written in early spring'. The poem begins with the 'sad thoughts'(4) felt even in the 'sweet mood'(3) in Nature:

> To her fair works did nature link
> The human soul that through me ran;
> And much it griev'd my heart to think
> What man has made of man.
> ('Lines written in early spring', 5 - 8)

The passage is referred to by Chandler in his discussion of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* as Wordsworth's first 'literary experiments' in 'translat[ing] Burkean politics into (equally Burkean) attacks on Rousseauist systems of (political) education'.[56] Chandler suggests that Wordsworth demonstrates his fear of the Rousseauist effort to 'systematize culture' by replacing the 'antinature of human institutions' with the 'rules and maxims', or, the 'rational method for the influence of prejudice and routine' in the name of natural education.[57] Wordsworth's 'Lines written in early spring' seems to me to be neither his attacks on Rousseauist systems of 'natural education' nor his 'literary experiments' in Burkean politics. Wordsworth is, I think, testing his system of education that encourages the reader to consider how the link between 'nature' and 'the human soul' has been broken by '[w]hat man has made of man'.

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[55] Godwin, *The Enquirer*, p. x.
[56] Chandler, p. xxii.
[57] Chandler, pp. 118-9.

Glen examines how the 'Lines written in early spring' encourages the reader's 'creative engagement' by frustrating his expectations.[58] The scene Wordsworth depicts in the 'Lines' is defined by Glen as a 'harmonious concord' of 'graceful interconnections and interrelationships' between 'nature'('Lines written in early spring', 5) and 'the human soul'(6), which is made by 'a "nature" not susceptible of rational control'.[59] Confronting 'a question, and a disquiet which there is no confident generalization to resolve', the reader experiences a newly creative relationship with that which is beyond the self', or, 'a wise passiveness'('Expostulation and Reply', 24).[60] Consequently, as Glen says, the reader learns 'a much more sophisticated sense of the relationship between the reflecting consciousness and the natural world than that which is implicit in the graceful verse'.[61] I would like to enlarge upon Glen's argument by suggesting that the 'Advertisement' enables the reader to resolve his 'question' and 'disquiet' through a 'long continued intercourse' with other *Lyrical Ballads* poems, then encourages him to acquire the 'sophisticated sense' of the relationship between Man and Nature.[62]

The reader's creative engagement in the interpretation of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* is questioned by John Beer. Unlike Glen, Beer says that Wordsworth may not have expected a 'full understanding' of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* from the reader, for there was 'not a unity that would have been evident to the first readers' but 'a unity provided by the mutual stimulus at work between Wordsworth and Coleridge - and to some extent Dorothy Wordsworth also - during [their Alfoxden - Nether Stowey periods]'.[63] In fact, Wordsworth says in the 'Advertisement' that many of the poems are based on the facts known to his 'friends'.[64] However, I would rather suggest that Wordsworth presents the poems to the reader not as the facts to share but as the materials for 'severe thought, and a long continued intercourse'.[65] The readers are, I think, not excluded from what Beer calls

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[58] Glen, p. 54.
[59] Glen, p. 41.
[60] Glen, pp. 42, 247.
[61] Glen, pp. 41-2.
[62] Glen, p. 42. The 'Advertisement', 739.
[63] John Beer, 'The Unity of *Lyrical Ballads*', in *1800: The New Lyrical Ballads*, eds. by Nicola Trott and Seamus Perry (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 6-22; pp. 10, 19.
[64] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[65] The 'Advertisement', 739.

the 'unity provided by the mutual stimulus'[66] between Wordsworth and Coleridge but encouraged to join it.

To facilitate the reader's understanding of the unity of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth suggests in the 'Advertisement' that the purpose of each poem can be understood through 'severe thought' and 'a long continued intercourse' with other poems.[67] Although the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* was published anonymously, Wordsworth may well have expected the reader to share the 'mutual stimulus' between himself and Coleridge by finding some hints in the one's contributions as to understand the purpose of the other's poem. To the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* Coleridge contributed four poems; 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere', 'The Foster-Mother's Tale', 'The Nightingale', and 'The Dungeon'. 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere' was completed in March 1798 when Coleridge was staying with the Wordsworths at Alfoxden, though the majority of it had already been composed by this time. 'The Foster-Mother's Tale' and 'The Dungeon' were extracted from Coleridge's play, entitled *Osorio*. It was, therefore, only 'The Nightingale; A Conversational Poem, Written in April 1798' that Coleridge composed for the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*. The date of composition suggests that 'The Nightingale' may have been influenced by Wordsworth's emerging concept of '*The Recluse or views of Nature, Man, and Society*'(*EY*, 214), which Coleridge observed with 'admiration' during his stay at Alfoxden in March 1798.[68] 'The Nightingale', I think, also reflects Wordsworth's ideals of the enlightenment of the reader in the 'Advertisement'.

'The Nightingale', in fact, demonstrates what Beer calls 'a unity provided by the mutual stimulus at work between Wordsworth and Coleridge - and to some extent Dorothy Wordsworth also - during [their Alfoxden - Nether Stowey periods]'.[69] 'My Friend, and my Friend's Sister!'(40), Coleridge says, and reminds them that 'Nature's sweet voices' are 'always full of love /And joyance!'(42-3). Listening to the Nightingale's song with the Wordsworths, Coleridge becomes convinced that '[i]n nature there is nothing melancholy'(15). A Poet's song, Coleridge insists, '[s]hould make all nature lovelier, and itself /Be lov'd, like nature!'(33-4). Beer asserts that in Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' the 'two threads' of the 1798 *Lyrical ballads* - 'enjoyment of the beauty of nature' and 'appreciation of the ordinary life of human beings' - can 'eventually be seen to come together

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[66] Beer, 'The Unity of *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 19.
[67] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[68] *CL*, I, 391. Coleridge to Cottle, 7 March 1798.
[69] Beer, 'The Unity of *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 19.

and interweave'.[70] 'The Nightingale' seems to me to show the interwoven threads of 'enjoyment of the beauty of nature' and 'appreciation of the ordinary life of human being' by suggesting the significance of Nature for Coleridge's friendship with the Wordsworths. In addition, 'enjoyment of the beauty of nature' is described as necessary for Coleridge's domestic happiness. After having been 'loitering long and pleasantly'(89), Coleridge says, 'Farewell', to the 'Warbler'(87) and to the Wordsworths. At his 'dear' home another sweet strain awaits Coleridge:

> My dear Babe,
> Who, capable of no articulate sound,
> Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
> How he would place his hand beside his ear,
> His little hand, the small forefinger up,
> And bid us listen!
> ('The Nightingale', 91 - 96)

Erdman suggests that having accepted the Wedgwoods' annuity in January 1798, Coleridge may have agreed with the Wedgwood brothers that the flow of rational stimuli should be controlled in such a way that children's senses could receive new impressions in the most rational order and quantity.[71] However, in 'The Nightingale' Coleridge aims not to control his son's sense-perception. In April 1798 Coleridge assuredly agreed with the Wordsworths that adults should make a child 'Nature's playmate'('The Nightingale', 97) and teach him nothing but what he would learn from 'the evidence of his senses'(*EY*, 180).

The concluding lines show a marked similarity between Wordsworth's views of Nature and Coleridge's:

> . . . once when he awoke
> In most distressful mood . . .
> I hurried with him to our orchard plot,
> And he beholds the moon, and hush'd at once
> Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
> While his fair eyes that swam with undropt tears
> Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam!
> ('The Nightingale', 98 - 105)

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[70] Beer, 'The Unity of *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 12.
[71] See Erdman, p. 488.

Just as *The Prelude* shows that Wordsworth was fostered by Nature in his childhood, 'The Nightingale' suggests that Coleridge regards Nature as not only his son's playmate but also his nurse. 'It is a father's tale'(106), Coleridge says, but seems to be convinced that his tale may be of considerable utility for all adults. He concludes his tale of the 'Nightingale' and of his 'dear Babe' by saying

> . . . if that Heaven
> Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
> Familiar with these songs, that with the night
> He may associate Joy!
> ('The Nightingale', 106 - 109)

Coleridge seems to suggest that adults should learn from children how to 'associate Joy' with Nature. Focusing on 'the influence of natural objects upon children' in 'The Nightingale', Erdman asserts that the Coleridge of the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads* is 'simplifying Wordsworth'.[72] Erdman, however, does not conjecture where and how Coleridge simplifies Wordsworth's description of nature and children in 'The Nightingale'. The Coleridge of 'The Nightingale' appears to me to be an affectionate father trying out as simple a system as the Wordsworths' in fostering his infant son rather than a poet demonstrating the educational effects of Nature.

Dealing with the education of an infant, 'The Nightingale' may suggest to the readers its connection with Wordsworth's two poems concerning little Edward, entitled 'Lines written at a small distance from my House, and sent by my little Boy to the Person to whom they are addressed' and 'Anecdote for Fathers', both of which were composed at around the same time as Coleridge's poem. Just as Coleridge begins 'The Nightingale' with his suggestion to Wordsworth and Dorothy in a spring scene, 'Come, we will rest on this old mossy Bridge!', listens with them to 'Nature's sweet voices',[73] Wordsworth begins the 'Lines written at a small distance from my House' with the description of 'the first mild day of March'(1). The poet says to his sister, 'Come forth and feel the sun. /Edward will come with you'(12-3), and suggests, 'bring no book, for this one day /We'll give to idleness'(15-6). In saying so, Wordsworth seems to echo Dorothy's letter of 19 March 1797, in which she says, 'We teach [Basil] nothing at the present but what he learns from the evidence of his senses . . . we have not

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[72] Erdman, p. 489n.
[73] Coleridge, 'The Nightingale', 4, 42.

attempted any further step in the path of book learning'(*EY*, 180). In 'The Nightingale' Coleridge says to the Wordsworths, 'In nature there is nothing melancholy', for he believes that 'Nature's sweet voices' are 'always full of love /And joyance!'.[74] In the 'Lines' Wordsworth agrees with Coleridge by saying, 'No joyless forms shall regulate /Our living Calendar'(17-8), and suggests, 'We from to-day, my friend, will date /The opening of the year'(19-20). In the following stanza Wordsworth goes much further than Coleridge's belief in 'love' in 'Nature's sweet voices':

> Love, now an universal birth,
> From heart to heart is stealing,
> From earth to man, from man to earth,
> — It is the hour of feeling.
> ('Lines written at a small distance from my House', 21 - 24)

The bond between 'heart' and 'heart' is described as the core of the close connection between Nature, Man, and Society. Here one may detect not only Wordsworth's preparation for *The Recluse* but also his early expression of one of the principal themes of *The Prelude*, 'Love of Nature leading to Love of Mankind'.[75]

Wordsworth's description of 'Love' seems to reflect his previous involvement with the Godwinian rational discussions as well as his future project. Wordsworth demonstrates a more marked difference between his educational principles and Godwinian rational principles by saying, 'One moment now may give us more /Than fifty years of reason'('Lines', 25-6). Unlike the Wedgwoods, Wordsworth neither systematizes children's sensory impressions nor tries out a highly systematic curriculum but aims to follow Nature:

> Some silent laws our hearts may make,
> Which they shall long obey;
> We for the year to come may take
> Our temper from to-day.
>
> And from the blessed power that rolls
> About, below, above;
> We'll frame the measure of our souls,
> They shall be turned to love.
> ('Lines written at a small distance from my House', 29 - 36)

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[74] Coleridge, 'The Nightingale', 15, 42-3.
[75] See The 1805 *Prelude*, VIII.

In 'The Nightingale' Coleridge hopes to educate his son to be 'Nature's playmate', who may 'associate Joy' with the beauty of nature.[76] Wordsworth enlarges upon Coleridge's 'father's tale' by suggesting that all of us should learn 'love' by following the 'silent laws' of Nature.[77] In addition, whereas Coleridge concludes 'The Nightingale' by saying, 'my friends! farewell',[78] and retiring to his dear home, Wordsworth seems to prepare the reader for 'Old Man Travelling'(which appears later in the same volume) by explaining how the old man has been 'by nature led /To peace so perfect' as to have 'no need' of 'effort' or 'patience'.[79] John Beer suggests that the Wordsworth of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* is on his way to the belief that 'we have all of us one human heart' ('The Old Cumberland Beggar', 146) of the 1800 edition, though still in the Coleridgean territory of the 'One Life'.[80] As the central theme of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* Beer points out 'the interdependence and liking of all life', which, stimulated by Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinerer', Wordsworth fully demonstrates in 'Tintern Abbey'.[81] However, the comparison between 'The Nightingale' and the 'Lines written at a small distance from my House' suggests to me that Wordsworth had already gone beyond Coleridge's 'One Life' to his firm belief in the unity of Nature and Man.

Wordsworth more thoroughly expresses his views of Nature and Man and his educational principles in the other poem concerning 'Edward', entitled 'Anecdote for Fathers', which, like 'The Nightingale', deals with the father's instruction of his son. 'Anecdote for Fathers' develops the theme of 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', namely what man can learn from Nature, by demonstrating the difference of it from what man has obliged child to learn. Following the conclusion of the 'Lines', 'this one day /We'll give to idleness',[82] 'Anecdote for Fathers' begins by introducing 'a boy of five years old'(1) and his father, who are spending '[o]ne morn'(5) strolling on their 'dry walk'(5). However, whereas in the 'Lines' the poet feels 'Love' in 'the hour of feeling',[83] the father feels a 'pain'(16) in thinking of his 'former pleasures'(9) on 'Kilve's delightful shore'(10). The poet in the

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[76] Coleridge, 'The Nightingale', 97, 109.
[77] Coleridge, 'The Nightingale', 106.
[78] Coleridge, 'The Nightingale', 100.
[79] Wordsworth, 'Old Man Travelling', 9-10, 12-3.
[80] Beer, 'The Unity of *Lyrical Ballads*', pp. 19-20.
[81] Beer, 'The Unity of *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 12.
[82] 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', 39-40.
[83] 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', 21, 24.

'Lines' aims not to teach Edward but to help him learn from the evidence of his senses. The father in 'Anecdote for Fathers', on the other hand, involves Edward in his pain by talking to him '[i]n very idleness'(20) and taking him 'by the arm'(26):

> "My little boy, which like you more
> . . .
> "Our home by Kilve's delightful shore,
> "Or here at Liswyn farm?"
> ('Anecdote for Fathers', 25 - 28)

Referring to 'Liswyn farm'(24) where Thelwall lived in this period, Wordsworth most likely remembered their meeting in July 1797. As Coleridge later recollected, Thelwall regarded it as 'very unfair' to 'prejudice a child's mind by inculcating any opinions before it should have come to years of discretion and be able to choose for itself'.[84] 'Anecdote for Fathers' leads us to consider whether it is fair to force the five-year-old Edward to make a choice. '[H]eld by the arm'(34) by his father, Edward answers, 'At Kilve I'd rather be /Than here at Liswyn farm'(35-6). It is, however, not his choice. The father has inculcated his preference for Kilve's 'delightful'(27) and 'smooth'(31) shore into Edward. Wordsworth seems to suggest to Thelwall and Coleridge that it is 'very unfair' to 'prejudice a child's mind by inculcating any opinions' not only before but also after his age of 'discretion' and 'choice'.[85]

The following stanza shows a more 'unfair' treatment of Edward by his father. While repeating his question, 'tell me why?', 'five times'(47-8), the father confuses Edward by saying that Liswyn farm's 'woods and green-hills'(41) are as 'sweet'(43) as Kilve's 'green sea'(44). At last Edward finds an answer to his father's question:

> "At Kilve there was no weather-cock,
> "And that's the reason why."
> ('Anecdote for Fathers', 55 - 56)

One may expect the father to ask Edward more about his dislike of the 'weather-cock' at Liswyn farm. However, the father says, 'my heart /For better lore would seldom yearn'(57-8), and concludes his 'anecdote' by hoping

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[84] Coleridge, *Table Talk*, I, 181.
[85] Coleridge, *Table Talk*, 1, 181.

> Could I but teach the hundredth part
> Of what from thee I learn.
> ('Anecdote for Fathers', 59 - 60)

What has the father learned from Edward? Wordsworth later recollected that he had intended to point out 'the injurious effects of putting inconsiderate questions to Children, and urging them to give answers upon matters either uninteresting to them, or upon which they have no decided opinion'.[86] However, Wordsworth's comment seems to me to imply more than 'Anecdote for Fathers' deals with.

Glen states that in 'Anecdote for Fathers' Wordsworth first suggests to the readers 'a difficulty with which familial or educational morality must deal', then encourages those who can 'learn' from their children to 'realize and question their assumptions about the proper education of children'.[87] Glen insists that the educational effects of 'Anecdote for Fathers' depend on the reader's capability of 'learning', for the concluding lines suggest that 'moral improvement' can be achieved not by what fathers would be 'taught' in rational terms but what they could 'learn'.[88] Thomas Pfau agrees with Glen by asserting that 'the poem's idiom encourages the reader to assemble a holistic interpretation and, in so doing, to approach the very experience of "reading" with a mind sufficiently reflexive not to repeat the very excesses from which the poem has derived its "tale"'.[89] Furthermore, he enlarges upon Glen's discussion of the educational effects of 'Anecdote for Fathers' on the reader by suggesting how Wordsworth 'reshapes the reader's psyche into a more sophisticated and resourceful agency':

> Rather than yielding a specific interpretative proposition or conclusion *for* the reader, "Anecdote" thus ends with a moment of filial recognition whose complex relevance to the reader's continuing engagement with *Lyrical Ballads* can only be grasped indirectly, by our reading against the grain of the father's obtusely affirmative and conditional appropriation of his son's "lore".[90]

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[86] William and Dorothy Wordsworth, *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Later Years, 1821-53*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Alan G. Hill, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88), I, 253.
[87] Glen, pp. 242-3.
[88] Glen, p. 244.
[89] Pfau, p. 200.
[90] Pfau, pp. 207-8.

I would like to add that 'Anecdote for Fathers' enables and encourages the reader to find a conclusion of 'the father's obtusely affirmative and conditional appropriation of his son's "lore"' through his 'continuing engagement', or, in Wordsworth's terms, 'severe thought, and a long continued intercourse'[91] with other poems in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*.

What, then, should adults learn from children? And what should they teach children? 'We Are Seven', which appears just after 'Anecdote for Fathers' in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, seems to require the reader's 'continuing engagement' with the discussion of the relationship of adult and child. 'We Are Seven' consists of the conversation between a poet and a 'little cottage girl'(5), who is 'eight years old'(6). Just as the father in 'Anecdote for Fathers' forces Edward to find a difference between Kilve and Liswyn farm, the poet in 'We Are Seven' leads the girl to understand his concept of death. However, whereas Edward answers his father's question '[i]n careless mood'[92] and finds a rather irrelevant reason for his choice, the girl demonstrates her 'will'(68) by insisting, 'Nay, we are seven!'(69). Alan Bewell points out the influence of Rousseau's *Émile* on Wordsworth's treatment of death in 'We Are Seven'.[93] In fact, just as Rousseau says in *Émile*, 'Naturally man knows how to suffer with constancy and dies in peace', though society, engendering and nourishing the fear of death, compels him to 'unlearn how to die',[94] Wordsworth says in the 'Preface' to the 1800 edition that 'We Are Seven' deals with 'the perplexity and obscurity which in childhood attend our notion of death, or rather our utter inability to admit that notion'.[95] However, like the father in 'Anecdote for Fathers', the Wordsworth of the 1800 edition seems to inculcate his views of childhood into the reader, for the girl, I think, shows no perplexity in saying

> "The first that dies was little Jane;
> "In bed she moaning lay,
> "Till God released her of her pain,
> "And then she went away.
> ('We are Seven', 49 - 52)

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[91] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[92] 'Anecdote for Fathers', 33.
[93] Alan Bewell, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment: Nature, Man, and Society in the Experimental Poetry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 195-6.
[94] Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 55.
[95] The 1800 'Preface', 745.

She has an ability to express a clear notion of the peace of death. It is the poet who, in Rousseau's terms, compels the girl to 'unlearn how to die' by 'engendering and nourishing the fear of death'.[96]

'We Are Seven' seems to suggest an answer to the concluding lines in 'Anecdote for Fathers', 'Could I but teach the hundredth part /Of what from thee I learn'(59-60). Just as the poet has learned from the girl that his rational concept of death has distanced himself from the unity with Nature, adults should learn from children that the connection between Nature and Man is beyond rational explanation. Both 'Anecdote for Fathers' and 'We Are Seven' seem to be intended in particular for Wordsworth's friends who advocated rational methods of education like Godwin, Montagu, and the Wedgwoods. Among them, James Webb Tobin is referred to in the first stanza, which was originally composed by Coleridge:[97]

> A simple child, dear brother Jim,
> That lightly draws its breath,
> And feels its life in every limb,
> What should it know of death?
> ('We are Seven', 1 - 4)

Wordsworth and Coleridge may have recollected Tom Wedgwood, who visited Alfoxden and Nether Stowey with Tobin in September 1797. Describing a 'simple child' in 'We are Seven', 'Anecdote for Fathers', and other poems, Wordsworth, I think, aimed to show his disapproval of the Wedgwoods' plan to develop 'genius' by providing children only with a series of progressively arranged 'DISTINCT VIVID' sensations which would cause 'DISTINCT VIVID' impressions.[98] Rational thinkers like the Wedgwoods should learn from 'simple' children that authoritarian teaching methods would hardly encourage the enlightenment of the individual.

The 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* aims not to control the reader's impressions by offering 'DISTINCT VIVID' sensations but to encourage the reader's creative engagement with the interpretation of a poem. Even the well-known themes of the day are presented to the reader as those which are suggestively unresolved. Robert Mayo discusses 'Simon Lee', 'The Last of the Flock', and 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill' as examples of the 'clarity, freshness, and depth' with which Wordsworth goes beyond the late

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[96] Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 55.
[97] See *Cornell LB*, 348.
[98] Erdman, p. 431.

eighteenth-century convention,[99] but does not say very much about wherein they consist. I would like to develop Mayo's argument by examining the 'clarity' and 'freshness' of Wordsworth's description of the miseries of society in 'Simon Lee' and 'The Last of the Flock' and the 'depth' of his psychological analysis in 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill'. In doing so, I will consider what and how the reader may learn from 'Simon Lee', 'The Last of the Flock', and 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill'.

'Simon Lee, the old Huntsman, with an incident in which he was concerned' is based on the fact known to Wordsworth in his Alfoxden period. Wordsworth later said

> This old man had been huntsman to the Squires of Alfoxden . . . The old man's cottage stood upon the common a little way from the entrance to Alfoxden Park. But it had disappeared. Many other changes had taken place in the adjoining village, which I could not but notice with a regret more natural and well-considered.[100]

Following Wordsworth's recollection, Thomas Hutchinson provides us with more detailed information about the old huntsman and the setting of the poem.[101] Kenneth MacLean examines how 'Simon Lee' expresses Wordsworth's 'social comment regarding the enclosure of common land'. In MacLean's opinion what is obvious in the poem is that 'Simon in old age is still able to live on and to cultivate a small piece of land to which he laid claim in his youth'.[102]

As MacLean suggests, the first half of the poem describes how Simon Lee was forced by the Enclosure Act to become the 'weakest'(40) and 'poorest'(60) in the village. However, as the 'Advertisement' suggests, the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* provides the reader not with the poet's opinions on the shortcomings of the government policies but with 'a natural delineation of

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[99] Robert Mayo, 'The Contemporaneity of the *Lyrical Ballads*', *PMLA* 69(1954), 486-522; p. 521 (hereafter referred to as 'Mayo').

[100] The notes dictated by Wordsworth to Isabella Fenwick in 1843; quoted from *Cornell LB*, 345.

[101] William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads, 1798*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, 3rd ed. (London, 1920), p. 232. Hutchinson suggests, 'Simon Lee had been huntsman to the St. Albyns . . . The 'village'(32) was Holford; the 'waterfall'(31) that famous one which formed "The Mare's Pool" in the wooded glen a quarter of a mile from Alfoxden House'.

[102] Kenneth MacLean, 'Agrarian Age: A Background for Wordsworth', *Yale Studies in English*, vol. 115 (1950), 20-1. As the background for 'Simon Lee' MacLeans calls attention to the fact that between 1700 and 1844, 1,765, 711 acres of common land were enclosed by Act of Parliament.

human passions, human characters, and human incidents'.[103] 'Simon Lee', I think, aims to encourage the reader to acquire his ethical code through 'severe thought' and 'a long continued intercourse'[104] with the inner dimensions of the 'weakest' and 'poorest' of society.

The latter half of 'Simon Lee' begins by encouraging the reader's participation in the poem:

> My gentle reader, I perceive
> How patiently you've waited,
> And I'm afraid that you expect
> Some tale will be related.
> ('Simon Lee', 69 - 72)

Instead of relating the 'tale', the narrator says

> O reader! had you in your mind
> Such stores as silent thought can bring,
> O gentle reader! you would find
> A tale in every thing.
> What more I have to say is short,
> I hope you'll kindly take it;
> It is no tale; but should you think,
> Perhaps a tale you'll make it.
> ('Simon Lee', 73 - 80)

Wordsworth's method in 'Simon Lee' is discussed by John Danby as 'the Wordsworthian trick', which encourages the reader's active participation by confronting the reader with the need to be aware of the old huntsman's miseries in the 'ambiguities of tone' of the narrator as well as of 'the suspension of choice'.[105] In fact, the poem concludes

> - I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
> With coldness still returning.
> Alas! the gratitude of men
> Has oftner left me mourning.
> ('Simon Lee', 101 - 4)

Wordsworth is, as Danby says, 'neither helping nor hindering' any reaction but 'watching' it, for he is convinced that the 'gentle'('Simon Lee', 69) reader

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[103] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[104] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[105] John F. Danby, *The Simple Wordsworth: Studies in the Poems 1797 - 1807* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), pp. 38-9 (hereafter referred to as 'Danby').

may be able to 'interpret its fullness as he best can'.[106] Danby suggests that Wordsworth's 'literary and psychic re-education' successfully restores the reader to 'that fresh air which he shares with the poet and with all men but which he must breathe for himself'.[107] However, he casts doubt on Wordsworth's trust in the whole reading public by suggesting that only those who are 'gentle'('Simon Lee', 69) - 'well-born, polished and sophisticated, high in station' -, as Danby glosses the word, are expected to 'kindly take it'(78).[108] Wordsworth, I think, does not exclude those who are not 'well-born, polished and sophisticated, high in station' from the intended readers of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, since in the 'Advertisement' he expresses his belief that anyone would acquire his own aesthetic and ethical code, with which he 'would find /A tale in every thing'('Simon Lee', 75-6).

Like Danby, Michael O'Neill suggests that 'Simon Lee' aims to make the 'gentle'(69) reader 'think'(79) 'by dramatizing the response of the narrator to Simon Lee's effusive gratitude', or, in other words, 'by showing himself (or his surrogate) being made to think (see 'Simon Lee', 101-4)'.[109] O'Neill agrees with Danby that Wordsworth is not confident of the reader's ability to understand the purpose of the poem, for the phrasing 'had you in your mind'(73) suggests that even the 'gentle reader'(69) is 'unused to the disciplines and strange liberations made possible by "silent thought"(74)'.[110] What Wordsworth expects from such an inexperienced reader is to 'have 'Such stores'(74) in mind' rather than to 'think'.[111] Furthermore, O'Neill suggests that concluding, 'the gratitude of men /Has oftener left me mourning'(103-4), 'Simon Lee' involves 'a questioning of the emotion itself, in a spirit of troubled kinship with other human beings'.[112] O'Neill seems to me to take little account of Wordsworth's aim implicit in the 'Advertisement'. What 'Simon Lee' leads the reader to do is not to 'kindly' think of Simon Lee's miseries, but to acquire an 'accurate taste in poetry',[113] with which he can establish his code of feeling. The conclusion of 'Simon Lee', I think, is expected by Wordsworth to provide the reader with neither

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[106] Danby, p. 40.
[107] Danby, p. 47.
[108] Danby, p. 45.
[109] Michael O'Neill, '*Lyrical Ballads* and Pre-Established Codes of Decision', in *1800: The New Lyrical Ballads*, eds. by Nicola Trott and Seamus Perry (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp, 123-140; p. 128 (hereafter referred to as 'O'Neill).
[110] O'Neill, p. 128.
[111] O'Neill, p. 128.
[112] O'Neill, p. 128.
[113] The 'Advertisement', 739.

moral lesson nor a definite judgement but 'stores'(74) to have a 'long continued intercourse' not only with the inner dimensions of Simon Lee but also with the connection between himself and other human beings. If the reader successfully acquires a talent, he can be so 'gentle' to other men as to overcome what O'Neill calls 'a questioning of the emotion itself, in a spirit of troubled kinship with other human beings'.[114]

'The Last of the Flock' also requires the reader to face the victim of the existing social systems. The poor shepherd talks about his miseries caused by the system of charity:

> "I of the parish ask'd relief.
> They said I was a wealthy man;
> My sheep upon the mountain fed,
> And it was fit that thence I took
> Wherefore to buy us bread:"
> "Do this; how can we give to you,"
> They cried, "what to the poor is due?"
> ('The Last of the Flock', 44 - 50)

The shepherd's miseries may remind contemporary readers of one of the most popular works of the day concerning the victims of the systems of society, namely John Langhorne's *Country Justice*. In Langhorne's 'Protection of the Poor' the aged family fell victims to abuse of the poor laws:

> No arm to save, and no protection near,
> Led by the lure of unaccounted gold,
> Thy bailiff seiz'd their little flock, and sold.
>
> Their want contending parishes survey'd,
> And this disown'd, and that refus'd to aid:
> A while, who should *not* succour them, they tried,
> And in that while the wretched victims died.
> (*Country Justice*, ii, 'Protection of the Poor', 114 - 120)

The 'wretched victims', like the shepherd in 'The Last of the Flock', were deprived of their small property by the vicious bailiff and 'refused aid' by the overseers of the poor who hounded them on from parish to parish. Langhorne concludes, 'In vain /To rave at mischief, if the cause remain!'('Protection of the Poor', 121-2) Even for a humane magistrate like Langhorne the reform of laws could not be sufficient for the protection of the

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[114] O'Neill, p. 128.

poor. 'Superior *here* the scene in every part!'('Protection of the Poor', 195), Langhorne says, and suggests to the reader a way to seek happiness:

> Here reigns great Nature, and there little art!
> Here let thy life assume a nobler plan,
> To Nature faithful, and the friend of man!
> (*Country Justice*, ii, 'Protection of the Poor', 196 - 198)

Following a 'nobler plan' of 'Nature', the reader is requested by Langhorne to show 'Nature's love' and 'Nature's virtue'('Protection of the Poor', 145, 140) towards his friends.

'The Last of the Flock' concludes with the shepherd's recollection of how his flock 'dwindled':

> "Sir, sad sight to see!
> From ten to five, from five to three,
> A lamb, a weather, and a ewe;
> And then at last, from three to two;
> And of my fifty, yesterday
> I had but only one,
> And here it lies upon my arm,
> Alas! and I have none;
> To-day I fetched it from the rock;
> It is the last of all my flock."
> ('The Last of the Flock', 91 - 100)

Unlike Langhorne's 'Protection of the Poor', 'The Last of the Flock' provides the reader with neither a moral lesson nor a definite judgement. Whereas in 'Simon Lee' the miserable tale of the old huntsman leads the narrator to show kindness, in 'The Last of the Flock' the narrator neither converses with the shepherd nor shows any emotion to him. The reader is, I think, expected to play a more active role in the interpretation of the tale of the poor shepherd and his family than in 'Simon Lee'. Mayo focuses on 'Simon Lee' and 'The Last of the Flock' as examples of the 'clarity, freshness, and depth' with which Wordsworth goes beyond the late eighteenth-century convention,[115] but does not say very much about wherein they consist. I would like to suggest that the 'clarity, freshness, and depth' consist in part in the reader's ability to go beyond the 'pre-established codes of decision'[116] of

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[115] See Mayo, p. 521.
[116] The 'Advertisement', 739.

the contemporary literary and political writings into the inner dimensions of fellow human beings.

'Goody Blake and Harry Gill' is also called by Mayo as Wordsworth's experiment in the 'clarity, freshness, and depth'.[117] In particular, I would like to discuss the 'depth' of Wordsworth's psychological analysis in 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill' as his means to encourage the reader to reconsider a 'well-authenticated fact which happened in Warwickshire' without the 'pre-established codes of decision'.[118] Wordsworth later recollected that 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill' had been influenced by Erasmus Darwin's analysis of *'Mania mutabilis'* (mutable madness) in *Zoönomia, or the Laws of Organic Life,* which he had read in March 1798.[119] Sue Weaver Westbrook points out the influence of David Hartley's psychological and physiological theories on 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill'.[120] It seems to me that even without any knowledge of Darwin and Hartley, Wordsworth had already formed his own psychological theories by exposing 'the vices of the penal law and the calamities of war as they affect[ed] individuals'(*EY*, 159) in *Adventures on Salisbury Plain.*

'Goody Blake and Harry Gill' seems to show us the development of Wordsworth's psychological approach to the effect of 'human incidents' on 'human characters' since the completion of *Adventures of Salisbury Plain* in March 1796. Like 'Simon Lee', 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill' concludes by speaking to the reader:

> Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
> Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill.
> ('Goody Blake and Harry Gill', 127 - 128)

What should the reader think? All he knows from the poem is that Harry Gill took 'vengeance'(68) for the 'trespass of old Goody Blake'(66) and shook her 'fiercely by the arm'(91). Then, Harry Gill received vengeance for his assault on the old helpless dame:

> . . . all who see him say 'tis plain,
> That, live as long as live he may,
> He never will be warm again.

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[117] Mayo, p. 521.
[118] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[119] See *Pr. W.* II, 356-9.
[120] Sue Weaver Westbrook, 'A Note on Hartley's Theory of "the Sensation of Chilliness" in Wordsworth's "Goody Blake e and Harry Gill"', *Wordsworth Circle*, 10 (1979), 124-6.

('Goody Blake and Harry Gill', 118 - 120)

There is no information about how Goody Blake has been after the incident, though it is obvious that she has no means to warm herself. What, then, does Wordsworth expect the reader to think of Goody Blake and Harry Gill? It seems to me that the concluding lines are intended to lead the reader to hold 'severe thought, a long continued intercourse with'[121] the ill-effects of the existing system of social, economic, and intellectual inequalities on both the poor and the rich.

As is well-known, some ideas for 'Harry Gill' came from Wordsworth's observations on the caretaker of Racedown Lodge, Joseph Gill. There is no evidence to explain why Wordsworth borrowed Gill's name for the rich man of no sympathy for the poor old woman, but it seems likely that Gill may have maintained some of the West Indian 'dishonourable actions' in 'the dealings between man and man'.[122] 'Goody Blake' seems to owe some ideas to the lower class at and around Racedown, which was 'wretchedly poor; ignorant and overwhelmed with every vice that usually attend[ed] ignorance in that class, viz - lying and picking and stealing &c &c.'.[123] The vicious tendencies of the poor were one of the chief themes not only of literary works but also of political writings. For instance, in *The Peripatetic* Thelwall demonstrates his political and moral views on the 'vagrant indolence' of the poor as one of the most marked ill-effects of the system of charity.[124] To lead the poor to contribute to 'the real wealth of the community', Thelwall insists that they should receive only the product of their industry.[125] I do not mean to point out the influence of *The Peripatetic* on 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill', though Thelwall's political views may have been known to Wordsworth. I would rather suggest the difference between Thelwall's conclusion and Wordsworth's. Whereas Thelwall intends to draw the reader's attention to the fact that social and economic inequalities cannot be solved by the government alone, Wordsworth expects the reader not only to think of the conclusion of the story but also to widen his social, political, and psychological views. In the late 1790s there were a considerable number of publications concerning the 'human incidents'.

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121 The 'Advertisement', 739.
122 See John Pretor Pinney to Mills and Swanton, 28 September 1778; Pinney Papers, Family Letter Book 13.
123 *EY*, 154. Wordsworth to Mathews, 20 and 24 October 1795.
124 Thelwall, *The Peripatetic*, II, 45.
125 Thelwall, *The Peripatetic*, II, 45.

However, 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill', I believe, may have attracted the attention of the reader with its 'depth' of a psychological analysis[126] and encouraged him to look into the effect of 'human incidents' on 'human characters'.[127]

Wordsworth most likely felt confident that the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* showed the development of his psychological analysis since the completion of *Adventures on Salisbury Plain* in March 1796, for he included in his contributions 'The Female Vagrant', which was extracted from *Adventures on Salisbury Plain.* To consider how deep Wordsworth goes into the mind of man in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, I will examine four poems concerning maternal affection, all of which were composed in March - 16 May 1798; 'The Thorn', 'The Mad Mother', 'The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman', and 'The Idiot Boy'.

Like 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill', 'The Mad Mother' is based on fact such as found in the letters from Annette Vallon,[128] the story of the 'poor creature' reported by a 'Lady of Bristol', and Coleridge's references to the 'Maniac' in his notebook.[129] Just as 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill' goes beyond the 'well-authenticated fact' with its psychological depth, 'The Mad Mother' shows Wordsworth's psychological approach to the facts which took place 'within his personal observation' and the observation of 'his friends'.[130] The first stanza of 'The Mad Mother' is a brief introduction of a woman with 'wild' eyes, who 'came far from over the main' with a 'baby'(1, 4-5). The rest of the story is the mother's monologue, which begins

> "Sweet babe! they say that I am mad,
> But nay, my heart is far too glad;
> ('The Mad Mother', 11 - 12)

James Averill points out that Wordsworth may have drawn upon Darwin's analysis of 'puerperal insanity' for 'The Mad Mother':

> the child should be brought frequently to the mother, and applied to her breast, if she will suffer it, and this whether she first attends to it or not; as by a few trials it frequently

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[126] See Mayo, p. 521.
[127] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[128] See Moorman, p. 385.
[129] See *Cornell LB*, 353n. Wordsworth later said to Isabella Fenwick, 'The subject was reported to me by a lady of Bristol who had seen the poor creature'. There are two entries (no.230 and no.260) in Coleridge's notebooks concerning the 'Maniac'.
[130] The 'Advertisement', 739.

excites the storgè, or maternal affection, and removes the insanity.[131]

Whether 'mad' or not, the mother knows what she owes to her baby:

A fire was once within my brain;
And in my head a dull, dull pain;
And fiendish faces one, two, three,
Hung at my breasts, and pulled at me.
But then there came a sight of joy;
It came at once to do me good;
I walked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood;
Oh joy for me that sight to see!
('The Mad Mother', 21 - 29)

In fact, the passage resembles Darwin's explanation of 'puerperal insanity'. However, the following passage goes beyond Darwin's analysis by showing the influence of maternal affection on her 'heart' as well as on her 'head'(22):

Suck, little babe, oh suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
('The Mad Mother', 31 - 34)

Furthermore, Wordsworth suggests that the connection between the mother and her baby is beyond rational explanation:

Oh! press me with thy little hand;
It loosens something at my chest;
('The Mad Mother', 35 - 36)

Even without knowing what 'something' is, the mother is, like the female beggar in the revised version of *An Evening Walk*, convinced that she will be '[b]old as a lion' for her baby (52). 'The Mad Mother' concludes, 'we'll live for aye'(100). There is no way of knowing whether and how the mother can bring up her baby. However, the poem seems to 'live for aye' by

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[131] James H. Averill, 'Wordsworth and "Natural Science": The Poetry of 1798', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 77 (1978), 242.

requiring the reader's 'severe thought' and 'long continued intercourse'[132] with 'something' in the connection between the mother and the child.

'The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman' is another example of a somewhat inexplicable element of maternal affection. The dying mother recollects

> When from my arms my Babe they took
> On me how strangely did he look!
> Through his whole body something ran,
> A most strange something did I see;
> ('The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman', 33 - 36)

Deprived of a 'most strange something', the Indian woman has neither strength nor motivation to live. She concludes her 'complaint' by saying, 'I feel my body die away, /I shall not see another day'(69-70). However, her 'complaint', like the mad mother's monologue, leads the reader to have a 'long continued conversation'[133] with a 'most strange something'(36). Describing the influence of maternal affection on a normal state of mind in 'The Complaint of the Forsaken Indian Woman', Wordsworth seems to propose that the reader should not consider human passions with scientific theories or rational principles.

Such a 'most strange something' lies not only between a mother and a child. 'The Idiot Boy' shows the influence of Susan Gale's 'dreadful fears' on her illness:

> Long Susan lay deep lost in thought,
> And many dreadful fears beset her,
> Both for her messenger and nurse;
> And as her mind grew worse and worse,
> Her body it grew better.
>
> She turned, she toss'd herself in bed,
> On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
> Point after point did she discuss;
> And while her mind was fighting thus,
> Her body still grew better.
>
> "Alas! what is become of them?
> "These fears can never be endured,
> "I'll to the wood." - The word scarce said,

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[132] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[133] The 'Advertisement', 739.

> Did Susan rise up from her bed,
> As if by magic cured.
> ('The Idiot Boy, 422 - 436)

What has 'cured' Susan is not 'magic' but her affection for Betty and Johnny. Danby says, 'The especially poignant thing about the happy ending is its chance-givenness'.[134] In fact, Johnny's travel is rewarded with Susan's recovery, Betty's love, and his own 'glory'(461). However, I would like to suggest that the ending may draw the reader's attention away from any 'pre-established codes of decision'[135] like 'chance-givenness'. Considering the connection between Susan's recovery and Johnny's travel, the reader may find his own approach to the connection between 'human passions', 'human characters', and 'human incidents'.[136]

The 'strange' element in human passions is not exclusive to Wordsworth's poems. Thelwall deals with a similar subject in a similar way in 'The Maniac' in *The Peripatetic*. In a church-yard Sylvanus and his friends hear 'a slow and tremulous voice, warbling with exquisite harmony', but in so faint and mournful a key that they can 'scarcely distinguish the words'(*The Peripatetic*, II, 131). Sylvanus asks himself, 'by what mysterious mechanism did the unconscious tear steal down my cheek responsive to the tremulous note?'(II, 132) He strives to find a cause for this 'mysterious mechanism', though his 'unconscious tear' is beyond rational interpretation:

> Here was no selfish retrospect; no anticipation of correspondent suffering . . . . I had not seen the mourner - I knew not the complexion of her woes - Desire and Apprehension stood equally aloof. - And yet I pitied - and I wept! (*The Peripatetic*, II, 132)

For his readiness to pity the only explicit reason is a 'faint and mournful' voice. His friend Wentworth also weeps profoundly, and says, 'there is something holy in the voice of sorrow'(II, 132).

Sylvanus, Wentworth, and other friends draw near to the spot, which is believed to be 'her mother's sepulchre'(*The Peripatetic*, II, 133). Sylvanus tries to describe the 'Maniac' in minute detail. Yet he is still unable to give rational explanation for the 'melancholy', which seems to '[diffuse] over' her

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[134] Danby, p. 57.
[135] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[136] The 'Advertisement', 739.

'whole form'(II, 135). At last he takes 'a single glance of her tearful eyes'(II, 135), which enables him to say

> . . . real Sorrow shuns with timid modesty the assistance of Compassion, and leaves the gracious boon of Mercy to impudent Imposture. *Seek*, then, thy objects, blest Benevolence. (*The Peripatetic*, II, 136)

Having defined his 'unconscious tear' as a sign of 'Compassion' caused by 'real Sorrow', Sylvanus concludes his encounter with the 'Maniac' by saying that 'Compassion' may lead to 'Benevolence'. Like Wordsworth, Thelwall expresses their closely interconnected views of Nature, Man, and Society, though in a different way. 'The Maniac' provides the reader with a philosophical account of the 'mysterious mechanism' whereas Wordsworth's poems encourage the reader to consider a 'most strange something'('Indian Woman', 36) in the connection between Nature, Man, and Society.

Among Wordsworth's contributions to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* 'The Thorn' shows the most marked similarities with Thelwall's 'The Maniac'. Just as Thelwall makes his narrator and hero Sylvanus relate the story of 'The Maniac' and conclude it with a moral lesson, Wordsworth says, 'the character of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently shew itself in the course of the story' in 'The Thorn'.[137] The reader, in fact, first encounters the narrator's minute description of the 'thorn' and its surroundings. However, as soon as the narrator begins to talk about a 'woman in a scarlet cloak'(63) crying "Oh misery! oh misery! /Oh woe is me! oh misery!"(65-6), he appears to be less 'loquacious'. When the narrator is asked, 'wherefore does she cry? . . . tell me why /Does she repeat that doleful cry?"(86-8), he is expected to sufficiently show his 'loquacious' character in explaining the reason why the woman cries near the thorn. Like Sylvanus, the narrator tries to make a relevant story from all that he knows about the aged thorn. However, he says, 'I cannot tell; I wish I could /For the true reason no one knows'(89-90). So he suggests

> . . . to the thorn, and to the pond
> Which is a little step beyond,
> I wish that you would go:
> Perhaps when you are at the place
> You something of her tale may trace.

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[137] The 'Advertisement', 739.

('The Thorn', 106 - 110)

To help the reader trace 'something' of her tale, the narrator says, 'I'll give you the best help I can'(111), and relates all he has heard and seen.

The narrator proves to be 'loquacious' when he begins to recount the love affair of 'Martha Ray'(116) and 'Stephen Hill'(121). 'Poor Martha!'(128), he says, and explains how she was driven mad by Stephen's betrayal on the wedding-day:

> on that woful day
> A cruel, cruel fire, they say,
> Into her bones was sent:
> It dried her body like a cinder,
> And almost turn'd her brain to tinder.
> ('The Thorn', 128 - 132)

The narrator's explanation of Martha's madness is neither persuasive nor convincing, for it is based not on his observations but on what 'they say'. ''Tis said', he continues

> a child was in her womb,
> As now to any eye was plain;
> She was with child, and she was mad,
> Yet often she was sober sad
> From her exceeding pain.
> ('The Thorn', 137 - 41)

The passage resembles 'The Mad Mother', which deals with what Darwin calls 'puerperal insanity' in describing how maternal affection removes the insanity from the mad mother. 'The Thorn' seems to go beyond Darwin's analysis by suggesting the effect of pregnancy on the insanity:

> Last Christmas when we talked of this.
> Old Farmer Simpson did maintain,
> That in her womb the infant wrought
> About its mother's heart, and brought
> Her senses back again:
> And when at last her time drew near,
> Her looks were calm, her senses clear.
> ('The Thorn', 148 - 54)

Martha's recovery, however, seems to be rather doubtful, for no one knows more than what 'Old Farmer Simpson did maintain'. The narrator says

> what became of this poor child
> There's none that ever knew:
> And if a child was born or no,
> There's no one that could ever tell;
> And if 'twas born alive or dead,
> There's no one knows . . .
> ('The Thorn', 157 - 62)

The passage seems to lead the reader to cast doubt on all the factual elements of the narrator's story of Martha Ray.

There is, however, the one thing that the narrator actually observed. 'Ere I had heard of Martha's name'(184), he recollects, 'I saw her face'(199). The encounter of the narrator with Martha resembles that of Sylvanus and his friends with the 'Maniac' in *The Peripatetic*. For Sylvanus 'a single glance of her tearful eyes' is enough to find a rational explanation to the 'mysterious mechanism' of his 'unconscious tear'.[138] The narrator also says, 'Her face it was enough for me'(200), but he neither spoke to her nor showed any emotion to her. Unlike Sylvanus, the narrator cannot explain what makes Martha cry, 'O misery!'(202) or what connects her with 'the thorn', 'the pond', and 'the hill of the moss'(210-1). Whereas Sylvanus concludes that 'Compassion' for 'real Sorrow' may lead to 'Benevolence',[139] the narrator only repeats

> And this I know, full many a time,
> When she was on the mountain high,
> By day, and in the silent night,
> When all the stars shone clear and bright,
> That I have heard her cry,
> "O misery! oh misery!
> "O woe is me! oh misery!"
> ('The Thorn', 247 - 53)

The concluding lines of 'The Thorn' require the reader to consider a conclusion to the tale of Martha Ray. Through 'a long continued

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[138] Thelwall, *The Peripatetic*, II, 135, 132.
[139] Thelwall, *The Peripatetic*, II, 136.

intercourse' with 'The Thorn', some readers may show 'the character of the loquacious narrator'.[140]

'The Thorn' is discussed by Albert S. Gérard as 'a global analysis chiefly aimed at bringing out the connection and interdependence of the three main motifs [the thorn, the narrator, and the story]' and 'the unity of mood and structure which characterises the poem'.[141] The 'connection and interdependence', I think, can be found in Wordsworth, the narrator, and the reader, for they help one another construct the 'unity of mood and structure' of 'The Thorn'. Gérard says, 'the narrator's imagination has penetrated to the truth of human misery, which is the actual theme of the poem, and which lies beyond the realms of fact and guilt and justice'(253). Stephen Parrish also insists on the significance of the narrator's imagination, for most of the events have 'no existence outside of his imagination'.[142] He defines 'The Thorn' as the narrator's 'dramatic monologue', which shows 'the way his imagination works'(90). I would rather term 'The Thorn' a conversation between the narrator and the reader, for the story of Martha Ray consists in the narrator's monologue and the reader's imagination. Heather Glen asserts that 'refusing to present [the] expected subject-matter in easily digestible form', Wordsworth encourages the reader's 'much more active attitude towards' and 'creative engagement with that which is suggestively unresolved'.[143] Although not referred to by Glen, 'The Thorn', I think, is one of the most successful experiments in encouraging the reader's active participation in creating 'a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents'.[144]

There seems to be another aim of 'The Thorn', which is intended in particular for Basil Montagu. As critics and biographers have pointed out, the name of 'Martha Ray' is taken from Montagu's mother, who was murdered by her jealous suitor, James Hackman, in 1779, and became well-known through publications in the 1780s.[145] However, little space has so far been devoted to discussing the reason why Wordsworth used the name of Montagu's mother for the mad mother. Brett and Jones say, 'It is completely inexplicable why Wordsworth should have chosen the name of

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[140] The 'Advertisement', 739.

[141] Albert S. Gérard, 'Of Trees and Men: the Unity of Wordsworth's "The Thorn"', *Essays in Criticism*, XIV (1964), 237-255; p. 238.

[142] Stephen Maxfield Parrish, 'Dramatic Technique in the *Lyrical Ballads*', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, LXXIV (1959), 85-97; p. 90.

[143] Glen, pp. 44, 54.

[144] The 'Advertisement', 739.

[145] For instance, see *Cornell LB*, 352n, *LB* (Brett and Jones), p. 291n.

his friend's unfortunate mother to be the heroine of the poem'.[146] Averill suggests that Wordsworth may well have been reminded of Martha Ray by Darwin's *Zoönomia*, in which the 'furious and melancholy insanity' of the spurned lover was explained by referring to the case of 'Mr. Hackman, who shot Miss Ray in the lobby of the playhouse'.[147] I would like to suggest that Wordsworth may have intended to remind Montagu of his mother's affection for him. In addition, the influence of pregnancy on Martha Ray's mind and heart seems to have been intended to suggest to Montagu that although his wife died only a week after Basil's birth, she had exchanged the 'most strange something'('Indian Woman', 36) with the baby in her womb. It seems likely that Wordsworth may have aimed to remind Montagu of his wife's affection for his son as well as of his mother's affection for him by using the name of Martha Ray. By the composition of 'The Thorn' in March 1798 the Wordsworths had already decided to go to Germany with Coleridge in the summer and to leave Basil with Montagu. 'The Thorn', I think, may well have reflected Wordsworth's hope that Montagu would look after the motherless Basil with a father's affection. The biographical aspect of 'The Thorn' is, however, less significant. 'The Thorn' requires no pre-established codes of decision like the poet's biography.

The biographical aspects are mentioned by Wordsworth in the concluding line in the 'Advertisement' concerning 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned'. He says that the two poems 'arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy',[148] though going into no further details about his 'friend' or the 'books'. However, Wordsworth's account seems to lead those who are attached to 'moral philosophy' to cast doubt on some influential books of the 1790s, in particular *Political Justice*. It also encourages those of little philosophical knowledge to judge the poems without the 'pre-established' moral code. 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned' are, I think, intended to encourage the reader's active participation in the discussion of moral philosophy between 'William'('Expostulation and Reply', 1) and his 'good friend Matthew'(14).

'Expostulation and Reply' begins with Matthew's expostulation:

> "Why, William, on that old grey stone,
> "Thus for the length of half a day,

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[146] *LB* (Brett and Jones), p. 291n.
[147] Averill, pp. 242-3.
[148] The 'Advertisement', 739.

"Why, William, sit you thus alone,
"And dream your time away?
('Expostulation and Reply', 1 - 4)

'William' seems to follow the poet in the 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', who suggests to his sister, 'this one day /We'll give to idleness'.[149] The poet in the 'Lines' says that spending a day in 'the hour of feeling', '[s]ome silent laws our hearts may make, /Which they shall long obey'.[150] William agrees with the poet in saying

"The eye it cannot chuse but see,
"We cannot bid the ear be still;
"Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
"Against, or with our will.
('Expostulation and Reply', 16 - 20)

Although finding no rational explanation, William is convinced of what he is feeling:

". . . there are powers,
"Which of themselves our minds impress,
"That we can feed this mind of ours,
"In a wise passiveness.
('Expostulation and Reply', 21 - 24)

One may find a similar passage in 'Lines written at a small distance from my House':

Love, now an universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth,
— It is the hour of feeling.
('Lines written at a small distance from my House', 21 - 24)

The 'hour of feeling'('Lines', 24) in the 'Lines' is defined in 'Expostulation and Reply' as a 'wise passiveness'(24). 'Love' stealing '[f]rom heart to heart', '[f]rom earth to man', and 'from man to earth'('Lines', 21-3) finds another name of 'powers'('Expostulation and Reply', 21).

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[149] 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', 15-6.
[150] 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', 24, 29-30.

The 'wise passiveness'('Expostulation and Reply', 24) seems to be Wordsworth's reply to the Wedgwoods' scheme to produce a future élite force by providing children with a series of progressively arranged 'DISTINCT VIVID' sensations which would cause 'DISTINCT VIVID' impressions.[151] Whereas the Wedgwoods agreed with Locke and Hartley that the mind was utterly passive, Wordsworth insists on a 'wise passiveness' by which the mind may make the laws in accordance with Nature. The 'Lines' concludes by repeating the poet's suggestion, 'bring no book; for this one day /We'll give to idleness'.[152] The concluding lines in 'Expostulation and Reply' seem to put more emphasis on the significance of the communication with Nature:

> "— Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
> "Conversing as I may,
> "I sit upon this old grey stone,
> "And dream my time away."
> ('Expostulation and Reply', 29 - 32)

Glen says that in 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned' Wordsworth's attempt to trace 'the sources of true moral awareness in one polite speaker's intercourse with nature' seems to be 'less than completely convincing'.[153] However, William's suggestion in 'Expostulation and Reply' seems to me to be convincing enough to encourage the reader to converse with Nature.

Glen suggests that Wordsworth describes 'the most significant experience' as 'essentially private and non-communicable'.[154] In fact, Wordsworth devotes the concluding paragraph in the 'Advertisement' to explaining the 'private' aspects of all of his poems except 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill':

> . . . it may be proper to say that they are either absolute inventions of the author, or facts which took place within his personal observation or that of his friends. ('Advertisement', 739)

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[151] See Erdman, p. 431.
[152] 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', 39-40.
[153] Glen, p. 252.
[154] Glen, p. 340.

Suggesting that some 'purposes of poetic pleasure'('Advertisement', 738) are evident only to his friends and acquaintances, the passage seems to be irrelevant to the other part of the 'Advertisement', in which Wordsworth demonstrates the utility of his poems for the whole reading public. However, it seems to me that suggesting some difficulties in understanding the purpose of each poem, Wordsworth intends to prepare the reader for 'severe thought' and 'a long continued intercourse'('Advertisement', 739). Jacobus says that Wordsworth aims to 'revitalize poetry' by 'breaking down the barriers between literature and life' in the hope of 're-educating his readers'.[155]. I would rather suggest that Wordsworth is breaking down the barriers between literature and life by drawing upon his and his friends' personal experience for a 'natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents'('Advertisement', 739). In doing so, he shows the reader how and where to find a connection between the general and the particular, the common and the singular, and the communal and the individual, or, in terms of *The Recluse*, the closely interconnected relationship between 'Nature, Man, and Society'.

To break the barriers between literature and life, 'The Tables Turned' begins by inviting Matthew and the reader to the intercourse with Nature. Now William turns the tables on Matthew by replying to his expostulation, 'Where are your books? . . . Up! Up!'('Expostulation and Reply', 5, 7):

> Up! up! my friend, and clear your looks,
> Why all this toil and trouble?
> Up! up! my friend, and quit your books,
> ('The Tables Turned', 1 - 3)

'Books!', William says, ''tis a dull and endless strife'(9). In 'Lines written at a small distance from my House' the poet says that '[o]ne moment' in 'the hour of feeling' may give us 'more /Than fifty years of reason'.[156] William agrees with the poet in saying, 'Let Nature be your teacher'(16), for she may teach us 'more of wisdom' on our life than books (12).

In 'Expostulation and Reply' William refers to the connection between the 'powers' and 'our minds'.[157] Now he goes into details about the powers of Nature:

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[155] Jacobus, p. 9.
[156] 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', 24-6.
[157] 'Expostulation and Reply', 21-2.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless —
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by chearfulness.
('The Tables Turned', 17 - 20)

The poet in 'Lines written at a small distance from my House' highlights 'Love' stealing from 'earth' to 'man'.[158] William goes beyond the poet by pointing out the effects of Nature on our 'minds', namely 'wisdom' and '[t]ruth'. In addition to Nature's intellectual instruction, he insists on her moral guidance:

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man;
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.
('The Tables Turned', 21 - 24)

Wordsworth's insistence on the educational effect of Nature seems to resemble Thelwall's ideals of education in *The Peripatetic*. As the title *The Peripatetic* derives from Aristotle's 'Peripatetic School' to which Theophrastus succeeded as head, Thelwall's educational ideals are based on Aristotle. Thelwall's narrator and hero, Sylvanus Theophrastus, points out the desirable influence of Nature at the Academus in Lyceum, a grove outside the city:

> If mute are the sages of antiquity, the instructive voice of Nature is ever eloquent and loud: if unblest with companions of congenial soul, who might improve, with useful converse, the moments of relaxation and pleasure, still the fields and groves afford their entertaining and intelligent society. (*The Peripatetic*, I, 12)

At the Academus 'Nature' helped Aristotle's sages give their pupils philosophical instruction by providing them with the encouragement of 'intellectual exercise' surrounded by the natural world. Now those sages have long been silent, although the 'instructive voice of Nature' remains an eloquent invitation to 'intellectual exercise'. Listening to the 'instructive voice of Nature' during his 'idle walk' in the outskirts of London, Sylvanus

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158 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', 21-3.

insists that children should be educated not in large cities like London but in a rural setting :

> I could not but reflect, that from the peripatetic habits of the ancient philosophers, and the attachment to rural life displayed by them all, in opposition to the practice of modern students, who are in some degree compelled, by the instructions of society, to bury themselves in large cities, we might readily account for the apparent paradox, why the health of the latter should be so proverbially debilitated, while the former have been so pre-eminent for their longevity. (*The Peripatetic*, I, 14)

The 'instructions of society' deprives children of the benefits of Nature, both physical and psychological. Sylvanus admits, 'Nature, if we would listen to her, would teach us a wiser lesson'(*The Peripatetic*, III, 127), but the present 'institutions of society' prevent children from listening to the instructive voice of Nature.

It is likely that in composing the *Lyrical Ballads* poems, Wordsworth may have recollected his discussion with Thelwall and Coleridge in July 1797 and his reading of *The Peripatetic*. However, Wordsworth goes much further than Thelwall's political comments on the existing educational system to a more general discussion of the ill-effects of rational methods:

> Our meddling intellect
> Mishapes the beauteous forms of things;
> - We murder to dissect.
> ('The Tables Turned', 26 - 28)

As examples of the 'meddling intellect' Wordsworth may think of Godwin's rational principles, the Wedgwoods' scheme, and Beddoes's toys. However, Wordsworth aims not to insist on the ill-effects of the 'meddling intellect' but to place more emphasis on the significance of the intellectual and moral instruction of Nature. 'Enough of science and of art'(29), says William, and concludes

> Come forth, and bring with you a heart
> That watches and receives.
> ('The Tables Turned', 31 - 32)

Wordsworth seems to be convinced that if the reader has a 'heart /That watches and receives'(31-2), he may receive from Nature an 'impulse' to learn 'more of man;/Of moral evil and of good'(21-3).

In the 'Advertisement' Wordsworth says that 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned' are based on his conversation on 'moral philosophy' with his friend ('Advertisement', 739). A number of critics have suggested that 'Matthew' owes something to William Hazlitt, who was writing his *Essay on the Principles of Human Action* at the time of his visit to Wordsworth at Alfoxden in May 1798.[159] Moorman says that Wordsworth thought of some philosophers, particularly Godwin, who 'ignored or even disapproved of . . . affection, pity, gratitude, kindness'.[160] I agree with Moorman that some contemporary readers may have regarded 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned' as Wordsworth's disapproval of Godwin's rejection of private considerations in *Political Justice.* However, what Moorman fails to take into account is that in 1798 Godwin no longer aimed to 'dissect' the 'beauteous forms of things' by the 'meddling intellect'[161] of *Political Justice.* If Wordsworth thought of Godwin, he may have referred to *The Enquirer,* in which Godwin insisted on the influence of books on the development of children's genius while paying little attention to the effect of Nature.

Moorman points to James Losh as another possible contributor to 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned'.[162] In fact, in May - July 1798 Wordsworth frequently travelled to Bristol to superintend the printing of *Lyrical Ballads,* and visited 'some particular friends at, and in the neighbourhood of, that place'.[163] On 25 May 1798 Losh moved to Shirehampton in the 'neighbourhood' of Bristol. On 12 June Wordsworth left Bristol for Shirehampton and stayed with Losh until 16 June. In his diary Losh recorded that on 15 June Wordsworth read aloud some of his poems.[164] Moorman suggests that Wordsworth perhaps read to Losh 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned', which he had carried with him to Cottle on 10 June.[165] I agree with Moorman, for, having known much about the Wedgwoods' rational principles, Losh appears to

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159 For example, see *LB*(Brett and Jones), p. 294n., and *Cornell LB*, 355-6n.
160 Moorman, p. 381.
161 'The Tables Turned', 26-8.
162 Moorman, p. 400.
163 *EY*, 219. Dorothy to Richard Wordsworth of 31 May 1798.
164 *EY*, 225n.-6n.
165 Moorman, p. 400.

Wordsworth to have been an ideal reader of his poems concerning the differences between a simple system of natural education and a systematic method like the one advocated by the Wedgwoods. In addition, Wordsworth expected Losh to approve of his ideals of the progress of human improvement through the civilization of the reader, for he had recently read all published numbers of 'a cheap monthly for the enlightenment of the masses',[166] entitled *The Œconomist*, to which Losh had contributed since January 1798. If Wordsworth discussed 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned' with Losh on 15 June, he most likely became confident of both his moral, philosophical, and educational views and his method of encouraging the reader to go beyond the 'pre-established codes' of 'moral philosophy' to his own ethical code.[167] It seems likely that having heard of the full title of Wordsworth's projected poem in March 1798,[168] Losh may have thought that *The Recluse* would have much the same end as *Lyrical Ballads*, namely the progress of human improvement through the enlightenment of all social classes. The biographical aspects of 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned' were known to a small number of Wordsworth's friends. However, Wordsworth may have hoped that his comment on 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned' in the 'Advertisement' was brief but encouraging enough for the reader to scrutinize the poems with his own code of moral philosophy.

The biographical aspects are central to the new historicists' analysis of the last poem of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, 'Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the banks of the Wye during a tour, July 13, 1798'. The most influential new historicist, Jerome McGann, insists that in 'Tintern Abbey' Wordsworth's harmonizing, idealizing, self-reflecting 'picture of the mind' occludes the historical reality of the abbey itself, which in the 1790s was haunted by transients and beggars.[169] Marjorie Levinson develops McGann's argument by suggesting that Wordsworth ignores the industrialization and commercialization of the Wye valley in the hope of 'seeking to purify his mind of political thoughts' and 'to hide its omission of the historical'.[170]

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[166] See *EY*, 214n.
[167] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[168] See *EY*, 214.
[169] Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: a Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 86.
[170] Marjorie Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 29-31.

James Heffernan focuses on the date of 'July 13', which evokes 'no less than three politically charged events: the storming of the Bastille in 1789, the "great federal day" commemorating it a year later, and the execution of Marat, which marked the beginning of the Terror'.[171] Heffernan admits that '[t]he traces of history and politics are often subtle, and some - like that fact that 13 July was the anniversary of Wordsworth's first arrival in France - are visible only to readers already acquainted with his life'.[172] However, he agrees with McGann and Levinson in suggesting that 'if we read the poem in light of his life as well as of Britain's political climate in 1798, "Tintern Abbey" reveals at once Wordsworth's yearning to escape from politics and his recognition that it is inextricably part of what makes him human'.[173] Like Levinson, Heffernan regards 'Tintern Abbey' as the work of a poet passing 'from politics and history through nature to autobiography'.[174]

As the new historicists assert, in 'Tintern Abbey' Wordsworth rarely deals with the natural and social surroundings and the historical facts. However, it seems to me that like in the other *Lyrical Ballads* poems, he intends not to ignore them but to describe them as how they have affected his mind since his first visit. I would rather term the Wordsworth of 'Tintern Abbey' a poet leading the reader from the ephemeral to the permanent, for he may expect that the knowledge of the poet's life and of Britain's political climate in 1798 may prevent the reader from scrutinizing the poem with his own aesthetic and ethical code. 'Tintern Abbey' has been treated by the new historicists as Wordsworth's prelude to his autobiography, entitled *The Prelude*. I would like to discuss 'Tintern Abbey' as the most successful example of Wordsworth's experiments in education in his Alfoxden period from 13 July 1797. In doing so, I hope to trace the development of Wordsworth's ideals of the progress of human improvement from his first contact with the French Revolution on 13 July 1790. Beer calls 'Tintern Abbey' the fullest expression to the principal theme of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, 'the interdependence and linking of all life'.[175] Glen also says that 'Tintern Abbey' successfully unites all of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* poems by exemplifying a state of 'wise passiveness' as 'an active yet

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[171] James A. W. Heffernan, 'Wordsworth's Levelling Muse in 1798', in *1798: The Year of the Lyrical Ballads*, ed. by Richard Cronin (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 231-253; p. 238 (hereafter referred to as 'Heffernan').
[172] Heffernan, p. 238.
[173] Heffernan, p. 238.
[174] Heffernan, pp. 246-7.
[175] Beer, 'The Unity of *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 12.

unintrusive relation to that which is other'.[176] Following Beer and Glen, I would like to examine how 'Tintern Abbey' unites the delineation of 'human passions', 'human characters', and 'human incidents' of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* poems and how it concludes Wordsworth's experiments in the enlightenment of the reader.

Another of the poems based on Wordsworth's biographical facts, 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', shows 'Love' stealing '[f]rom heart to heart', '[f]rom earth to man', and 'from man to earth' in 'the hour of feeling'.[177] 'Tintern Abbey' begins by suggesting that even in 'hours of weariness'(28) the poet is aware of 'sensations sweet, /Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart, /And passing even into [his] purer mind /With tranquil restoration'(28-31). In 'The Tables Turned' 'William' insists that if one has a 'heart /That watches and receives', he may receive from Nature an 'impulse' to learn 'more of man;/Of moral evil and of good'.[178] In 'Tintern Abbey' the poet describes the 'feelings' of 'unremembered pleasure', which 'perhaps' 'may have had no trivial influence /On that best portion of a good man's life'(31-4). The poet is more closely united with Nature than any other characters in the *Lyrical Ballads* poems are, for he has already broken the barrier between his heart and the objects to watch and receive.

The poet understands that the 'feelings' are beyond rational explanation, but tries to find a means to describe them:

> that serene and blessed mood,
> In which the affections gently lead us on,
> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul:
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.
>
> ('Tintern Abbey', 42 - 50)

The passage shows a step out of a 'wise passiveness'('Expostulation and Reply', 24) to a 'living soul', with which we may go beyond the knowledge of 'moral evil and of good'('The Tables Turned', 23) into 'the life of things'.

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[176] Glen, p. 258.
[177] 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', 21-4.
[178] 'The Tables Turned', 31-2, 21-3.

'Lines written at a small distance from my House' concludes by suggesting a way in which we could acquire both the unity with 'silent laws' of Nature and the 'love' with other human beings.[179] 'Tintern Abbey' puts more emphasis on the significance of the 'silent laws' for 'the year to come':[180]

> While here I stand, not only with the sense
> Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
> That in this moment there is life and food
> For future years.
> ('Tintern Abbey', 63 - 66)

Now the poet can describe the unity of all things in time and space with confidence. He knows more of Nature than any other characters in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, for he has already acquired such a 'wise passiveness' as to hear '[t]he still, sad music of humanity, /Not harsh nor granting, though of ample power /To chasten and subdue'(92- 4) and to feel a 'sense sublime /Of something far more deeply interfused'(96-7).

With 'pleasing thoughts'(64) the poet goes much further into the 'dwelling'(98) of that 'something'(97). At last he can define it as

> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.
> ('Tintern Abbey', 101 - 103)

He confidently declares that he was, is, and will be a 'lover'(104)

> of all the mighty world
> Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,
> And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
> In nature and the language of the sense,
> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being.
> ('Tintern Abbey', 106 - 112)

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[179] 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', 29.
[180] 'Lines written at a small distance from my House', 29, 31.

Demonstrating the 'anchor' of his 'pure thoughts' and the 'soul /Of all [his] moral being', Wordsworth, I think, intends to call the reader's attention to the beneficial effects of nature on the mind and the heart.

With the conviction of his everlasting unity with 'all the mighty world' of nature, the poet speaks to his companion

> in thy voice I catch
> The language of my former heart, and read
> My former pleasures in the shooting lights
> Of thy wild eyes.
> ('Tintern Abbey', 117 - 120)

His 'dear, dear Sister'(122) reminds the poet of 'what [he] was once'(121). He devotes the last forty lines in the poem to praying that his sister would form as close a connection with Nature as he has done:

> in after years,
> When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
> Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
> Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
> Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
> For all sweet sounds and harmonies . . .
> ('Tintern Abbey', 138 - 143)

Heffernan asserts that in 'Tintern Abbey' Wordsworth is passing 'from politics and history through nature to autobiography', and insists, 'we learn of the particular experience of a particular man at a particular time and space'.[181] However, the passage seems to me to demonstrate a general aspect of the particular experience, which requires no autobiographical information for understanding.

Glen says that what the reader finds through the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* are not 'satisfying relations between people' but '[i]solation' and 'separateness'.[182] However, 'Tintern Abbey' displays the poet's everlasting affection for his sister:

> If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
> Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts,
> Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
> And these my exhortations!

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[181] Heffernan, pp. 246-7, 243.
[182] Glen, p. 340.

('Tintern Abbey', 144 - 147)

Furthermore, the concluding lines suggest the interdependence of the poet and his sister:

> Nor wilt thou then forget,
> That after many wanderings, many years
> Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
> And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
> More dear, both for themselves, and for thy sake.
> ('Tintern Abbey', 156 - 160)

Describing the close connection between the poet and his sister as the smallest unit of the unity of all things, 'Tintern Abbey' seems to show the reader a first step towards the 'mighty world'(106) of Nature, which may lead to love of mankind.

Glen points out that in 'Tintern Abbey' the reader is confronted with 'uncertainties' and 'unevenness'.[183] It seems to me that Wordsworth may expect the reader's bewilderment. However, he may feel convinced that just as the poet promises to come back to the Wye whenever he needs to confirm his everlasting unity with Nature and other human beings, the reader may hold a 'long continued intercourse'('Advertisement', 739) with the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* whenever he hopes to have encouragement to pursue his own aesthetic and ethical code. 'Tintern Abbey' is, I believe, a successful conclusion of Wordsworth's experiments in the progress of human improvement through the enlightenment of the individual.

The completion of 'Tintern Abbey' in July 1798 marks the end of Wordsworth's West Country period. It also marks the end of the close connection between Wordsworth and Coleridge. When the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* was published in September 1798, Wordsworth had already been on his way to Germany. Although the poems were published anonymously, Wordsworth demonstrated his aim and method in the 'Advertisement':

> The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure. ('Advertisement', 738)

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[183] Glen, p. 258.

Wordsworth did not see any review until his return to England in May 1799. However, he seems to have been confident that the reader would seek the 'honourable characteristic' of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* not in 'the writings of Critics' but in his poetic 'experiments'('Advertisement', 738). He may have expected that 'after many wanderings, many years /Of absence'('Tintern Abbey', 157-8) the successful results of his 'experiments' in the progress of human improvement through the enlightenment of the reader would make the natural surroundings in the West Country '[m]ore dear' both 'for themselves' ('Tintern Abbey', 160) and for their contributions to the growth of himself as a poet-preceptor.

5. The Prelude to the Prophecy:
October 1798 - June 1802

On 15 September 1798 when Wordsworth was in Yarmouth waiting for a ship to Hamburg, his poetic experiments in education were published in Bristol by Joseph Cottle in 'one small volume, without the name of the author' under the title of "Lyrical Ballads, with other Poems".[1] On 18 September Wordsworth, Dorothy, and Coleridge landed at Hamburg.[2] On the same day James Losh received 'a carriage of books from Bristol' and on the next day he read 'Wordsworth's poems aloud'.[3] There is no record of Losh's comments on Wordsworth's poems in *Lyrical Ballads.* However, having been involved with the periodical for 'the enlightenment of the masses',[4] Losh most likely thought that Wordsworth's poetic experiments in the civilization of the reader would be of considerable utility for the progress of human improvement. In addition, having known about the *Recluse* scheme, Losh may have regarded *Lyrical Ballads* as a successful step to a grandiose project for a poem on 'Nature, Man, and Society', in which Wordsworth hoped to 'contrive to convey most of the knowledge of which [he was] possessed'.[5]

Since the completion of the 'Advertisement' to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth may have considered a way in which he could develop the themes of *Lyrical Ballads* - 'human passions', 'human characters', and 'human incidents'[6] - in his future poems, in particular *The Recluse or views of Nature, Man, and Society.* In a letter to Losh of 11 March 1798 he did not mention the aim of *The Recluse.* While composing his contributions to *Lyrical Ballads* and the 'Advertisement', Wordsworth may have become convinced that *The Recluse* would be his next experiments in the progress of human improvement through the enlightenment of all social classes. 'Tintern Abbey', I think, showed him a way to the poem concerning the connections of 'Nature, Man, and Society', for it recorded the development of his 'knowledge' of 'Nature' and 'Man' during the five years from his first visit to the banks of the Wye of 13 July 1793 to his second visit of 13 July 1798.

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[1] See *EY*, 227. Dorothy's letter from London, 13 September 1798. See also *EY*, 228n. According to Dorothy's Hamburg journal, Wordsworth, Dorothy, and Coleridge left Yarmouth for Hamburg on the morning of 16 September.
[2] See *EY*, 228. Dorothy's letter from Hamburg, 21 September 1798.
[3] See *EY*, 227n.
[4] See *EY*, 214n.
[5] *EY*, 214. Wordsworth to Losh, 11 March 1798.
[6] The 'Advertisement', 739.

As soon as Wordsworth settled at Goslar, a secluded town in East Saxony, with Dorothy in October 1798, he may have begun to consider the effect of Nature on the growth of his mind and heart. In 'Tintern Abbey' the poet recollects his 'boyish days'(74), and says

> That time is past,
> And all its aching joys are now no more,
> And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
> Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur: other gifts
> Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
> Abundant recompence.
> ('Tintern Abbey', 84 - 89)

To scrutinize how the 'gifts' would provide him with the 'life and food /For future years'('Tintern Abbey', 65-6), Wordsworth begins to trace his upbringing back to his birth by following the River Derwent, which ran along his birth-place at Cockermouth. The existing earliest draft of Wordsworth's autobiographical poem begins by saying, 'O Derwent'

> Was it for this
> That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
> To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
> And from his alder shades and rocky falls,
> And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
> To intertwine my dreams?[7]

Unlike the Wye, the Derwent provides him with 'no gentle dreams /Complacent, fashioned fondly to adorn /The time of unrememberable being'('Was It For This', 17-9). So he switches his attention to the time of rememberable being, when he was a child of 'four years'('Was It For This', 20). In the concluding lines in 'Tintern Abbey' Wordsworth expected Dorothy to help him to make the 'wild ecstasies' 'matured /Into a sober pleasure'.[8] Dorothy's memory was, in fact, a 'dwelling-place' for 'all sweet sounds and harmonies'[9] in their childhood, for she said in her letter of August 1805 that she remembered their Cockermouth house, in particular 'the garden bordering on the River Derwent' 'as vividly as if [she] had been there'(*EY*, 616). In addition, Dorothy's memory was a 'dwelling-place' for

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[7] The existing earliest draft of *The Prelude*, first published by Jonathan Wordsworth in *Four Texts*, entitled 'Was It For This', 7, 1-6.
[8] 'Tintern Abbey', 139-40.
[9] 'Tintern Abbey', 142.

their observations on little Basil's harmonies with Nature at Racedown and Alfoxden. Recollecting Basil, Dorothy may have reminded Wordsworth that '[t]ill a child [was] four years old he need[ed] no other companions, than the flowers, the grass, the cattle, the sheep'(*EY*, 222). It was, I believe, Dorothy who contributed much to the description of the close connection between the four-year-old 'naked savage' Wordsworth ('Was It For This', 29) and the natural surroundings in the Lake District.

'After the age of about four years', Dorothy said in her letter of June 1798

> [the child] begins to want some other stimulus than the mere life that is in him; his efforts would be greater but he must have an object . . . (*EY*, 222)

Referring to his and Dorothy's observations on the four-and-a-half-year-old Basil, Wordsworth presumably tries to recollect his own upbringing after the age of four years. In 'Tintern Abbey' he briefly talked about '[t[he coarser pleasures of my boyish days,/And their glad animal movements', though admitting, 'I cannot paint /What then I was'.[10] Now he aims to paint what he was in his boyish days by documenting his 'efforts' to obtain an 'object'(*EY*, 222). What occurs to him first is his experience of hanging alone above the raven's nest. 'Though mean, /And though inglorious, were my views', he says, 'the end /Was not ignoble'('Was It For This', 35-7), for he heard the 'strange utterance' and saw the sky which 'seemed not a sky /Of earth'(44-6). Painting his 'mean' and 'inglorious' effort as a sort of transcendental experience, Wordsworth becomes convinced that since his childhood he has been nurtured not only by the Derwent but also by other 'beings' of Nature like the Cumbrian 'hills'(47). In the memories of his close connection with Nature Wordsworth finds 'high objects'(53) and 'eternal things'(53), which may lead him to 'recognize /A grandeur in the beatings of the heart'(57-8).

Wordsworth goes into further details about Nature's 'discipline /Both pain and fear'('Was It For This', 56-7), which forced him to feel like 'a man flying from something that he dread[ed]'.[11] Recollecting his memory as a 'fell destroyer'(83) of the woodcocks' snares, he documents what he experienced after he caught the bird from his friend's snare:

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[10] 'Tintern Abbey', 74-7.
[11] 'Tintern Abbey', 71-2.

I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.
('Was It For This', 94 - 97)

In 'Tintern Abbey' Wordsworth went no further than suggesting the 'sense sublime /Of something far more deeply interfused',[12] and expected the reader to find a definition of that 'something'. Now without any reader, Wordsworth shows no hesitation in saying, 'though doubting yet not lost, I tread /The mazes of this argument'(98-9). He determines to proceed from the 'time of unrememberable being'(19) to his 'rememberable days'(110) in the hope of knowing more about a 'grandeur in the beatings of the heart'(58).

The 'sense sublime of /Something'[13] in the *Lyrical Ballads* poems is now called 'Soul of things'(114), which fits

Our new existence to existing things,
And in our dawn of being constitute[s]
The bond of union betwixt life and joy.
('Was It For This', 121 - 123)

Convinced of the 'bond of union' with the 'Soul' of all the 'existing things' since his birth, Wordsworth confronts again the 'strange utterance'(44) and the 'sounds /Of undistinguishable motion'(95-6). 'Yes, I remember', he says

when the changeful earth
And twice five seasons on my mind had stamped
The faces of the changeful year, even then,
A child, I held unconscious intercourse
With the eternal beauty . . .
('Was It For This', 124 - 128)

At around the age of ten Wordsworth let Nature be his teacher and learned from her a 'pure organic pleasure'(129). The draft of 'Was It For This' concludes by insisting on the importance of 'primordial feelings'(147) to the 'noblest ends'(146) of later life. Wordsworth's first experiment in tracing the growth of his poet's mind is his first preparatory step towards *The*

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[12] 'Tintern Abbey', 96-7.
[13] 'Tintern Abbey', 96-7.

Recluse. It is also, rather ironically, his first step apart from his readers, for he is fully aware that none of his transcendental experience can be shared by anyone in saying, 'I feel' the 'tranquillizing power' in the 'primordial feelings'(147, 149-50).

Wordsworth's attempt at recording the 'primordial feelings' did not conclude with the one hundred and fifty lines of the 'Was It For This' draft. With 'no society' at the 'lifeless town' of Goslar[14] he devoted most of his time in one of the coldest winters of the eighteenth century not to *The Recluse* but to a further exploration of the 'primordial feelings'. By the time of his moving out of Goslar on 23 February 1799, Wordsworth had completed another two hundred and eighty lines. The expanded draft of his autobiographical poem is now known as the first part of the Two-Part version of *The Prelude*. The lines added to the 'Was It For This' draft are concerned chiefly with Wordsworth's transcendental experience in his early childhood, through which he had been educated by Nature as her 'favoured being'(The Two-Part *Prelude*, I, 70), including the boat-stealing (I, 81-129) and skating (I, 150-185) episodes and the 'spots of time' sequence (I, 258-376).[15] It seems likely that the more closely Wordsworth examines his upbringing as Nature's 'favoured being'(I, 70), the less confident he becomes of the reader's ability to 'recognize /A grandeur in the beatings of the heart'('Was It For This', 57-8; The Two-Part *Prelude*, I, 140-1). Concluding the first part of the Two-Part *Prelude* by speaking to Coleridge, Wordsworth aims to find the utility of his autobiographical study for the 'honourable toil'(I, 453), entitled *The Recluse*. However, unlike in their West Country period, Coleridge lives so far from Goslar as to give neither '[h]arsh judgements'(The Two-Part *Prelude*, I, 459) nor 'admiration' for 'the Giant Wordsworth'(*CL*, I, 391).

At the end of April 1799 Wordsworth and Dorothy concluded their life in Germany and left for England. In mid May 1799 they settled at the Hutchinsons' house at Sockburn. It was not long before Wordsworth read Southey's review of *Lyrical Ballads* in the *Critical Review* for October 1798. Southey closely examines Wordsworth's poems, and asserts

> The 'experiment', we think, has failed, not because the language of conversation is little adapted to 'the purpose

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[14] See *EY*, 247.

[15] The home-amusements section (The Two-Part *Prelude*, I, 206-33) was added in late 1799.

> of poetic pleasure', but because it had been tried upon uninteresting subjects.[16]

'Yet', he says, 'every piece discovers genius', and in particular, 'Tintern Abbey' demonstrates Wordsworth's 'superior powers'.[17] Southey concludes his review by admitting that Wordsworth's 'talents', though frequently ill employed in *Lyrical Ballads*, 'certainly rank him with the best of living poets'.[18] Having read Southey's review, Wordsworth presumably thought that some readers may well have been misguided by Southey's severe comments on the poems and his 'vague praises' of the author's talents.[19]

Southey's review may have led Wordsworth to consider what sort of subject would appeal to the reader and how he should employ his talents. He hoped to consult Coleridge, who had returned to England in mid July 1799. However, they did not see each other until October. In late summer Wordsworth sought a way in which he could give the fullest expression to his talents by reconsidering the completed part of his autobiographical work. Wordsworth begins the subsequent part by speaking to Coleridge:

> Thus far, my friend, have we retraced the way
> Through which I travelled when I first began
> To love the woods and fields. The passion yet
> Was in its birth, sustained as might befall
> By nourishment that came unsought . . .
> (The Two-Part *Prelude*, II, 1 - 5)

Having recorded his 'unconscious intercourse /With the eternal beauty'(I, 394-5), Wordsworth proceeds to examine his conscious intercourse with Nature. However, he soon admits

> A traquillizing spirit presses now
> On my corporeal frame, so wide appears
> The vacancy between me and those days,
> Which yet have such self-presence in my heart
> That sometimes when I think of them I seem
> Two consciousnesses - conscious of myself,
> And of some other being.

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[16] Robert Southey, *The Critical Review*, vol. XXIV (October 1798); quoted from *LB* (Brett and Jones), p. 320.
[17] ibid., p. 320.
[18] ibid., p. 320.
[19] *EY*, 268. Wordsworth to Cottle, summer 1799.

(The Two-Part *Prelude*, II, 25 - 31)

The part composed at Goslar is concerned with his transcendental experience of the 'spots of time' in his 'existence'(The Two-Part *Prelude*, I, 288). To fill the 'vacancy' between the present and the past, it is necessary to record his regular contact with Nature in his everyday experience. In 'Tintern Abbey' Wordsworth says that the 'coarser pleasures of [his] boyish days' were replaced with 'the joy /Of elevated thoughts', namely 'a sense sublime /Of something far more deeply interfused'.[20] He aims to demonstrate the continuation of the past and the present by examining how in adolescence Nature comes to be 'sought /For her own sake'(The Two-Part *Prelude*, ll, 241-2).

'Hard task to analyse a soul'(II, 262), Wordsworth admits, but regards it as not hard to trace 'the progress of our being'(Il, 269) from our first experience of the unity of souls, namely that of mother and child. In his 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* poems Wordsworth deals with the connection between mother and child as the first step towards the unity of Nature, Man, and Society. In the 'Was It For This' draft he focuses on Nature's 'bounteous power', which constitutes the 'bond of union' between '[o]ur new existence and existing things'.[21] Now he intends to explain how maternal affection leads to the unity of all. The infant babe first finds 'manifest kindred with an earthly soul'(II, 272) in gathering 'passion from his mother's eye'(II, 273), then becomes 'eager to combine /In one appearance all the elements /And parts of the same object'(II, 277-9). The 'discipline of love'(II, 281) enables the babe to acquire manifest kindred with all existing things by interfusing '[a]long his infant veins' 'the gravitation and the filial bond /Of nature'(II, 292-4). The infant babe, I think, exemplifies a 'wise passiveness',[22] for he 'lives /An inmate of this *active* universe' and '[f]rom nature largely he receives, nor so /Is satisfied, but largely gives again'(II, 295-8). The infant's mind, Wordsworth confidently says

> Even as an agent of the one great mind,
> Creates, creator and receiver both,
> Working but in alliance with the works
> Which it beholds.
>
> (The Two-Part *Prelude*, II, 302 - 305)

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[20] 'Tintern Abbey', 74, 95-7.
[21] 'Was It For This', 109, 123, 121.
[22] 'Expostulation and Reply', 24.

The '[p]oetic spirit of our human life'(II, 306), he believes, will be 'preeminent till death'(II, 310).

Wordsworth now intends to fill the vacancy between the past and the present by lining up the spots of time of transcendental experience. While drinking 'the visionary power'(II, 360), he recollects, the soul

> Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
> Remembering not - retains an obscure sense
> Of possible sublimity, to which
> With growing faculties she doth aspire,
> With faculties still growing, feeling still
> That whatsoever point they gain they still
> Have something to pursue.
> (The Two-Part *Prelude*, II, 365 - 371)

Nature has taught her 'favoured being'(I, 70) not 'what' but 'how' to feel. The passage, I think, reminded Wordsworth of his 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* poems, in which he suggested to the reader that an 'obscure sense /Of possible sublimity' would remain in the soul as an 'impulse' to pursue more of Nature and man.[23]

'How shall I trace the history, where seek /The origin of what I then have felt?'(II, 395-6) To answer the questions, Wordsworth recollects 'how' he has felt:

> Oft in those moments such a holy calm
> Did overspread my soul that I forgot
> The agency of sight, and what I saw
> Appeared like something in myself, a dream,
> A prospect in my mind.
> (The Two-Part *Prelude*, II, 397 - 401)

His '[c]reative agency' will fill the vacancy between the past and the present with the 'interminable building reared /By observation of affinities /In Objects where no brotherhood exists /To common minds'(II, 431-5). He exclaims, 'I find /A never-failing principle of joy /And purest passion'(II, 494-6) in his unity with the '*active* universe'(II, 296). Now Wordsworth finds the answer to the question, 'Was it for this?', which has preoccupied him since October 1798: it is for this never-failing principle of joy and passion that he has been educated by Nature to be an 'agent of the one great

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[23] See 'The Tables Turned', 21-3.

mind'(II, 302). Wordsworth seems to find his duty in *The Recluse*, namely a poet and 'agent of the one great mind'(II, 302) delivering the 'never-failing principle of joy /And purest passion'(II, 495-6) to the reader's mind.

In mid September 1799 while composing *The Prelude*, Wordsworth heard from Coleridge, whom he had last met at Göttingen some five months previously. Stating, 'I am anxiously eager to have you steadily employed on "The Recluse"',[24] Coleridge aimed to draw Wordsworth's attention from the growth of his poet's mind to the poem of 'considerable utility'(*EY*, 214) for the public. 'My dear friend', he said

> I do entreat you go on with 'The Recluse'; and I wish you would write a poem, in blank verse, addressed to those, who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and are sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness, disguising the same under the soft titles of domestic attachment and contempt for visionary *philosophes*. (*CL*, I, 527)

Coleridge was convinced that *The Recluse* would achieve what one-time radical reformists including himself and Wordsworth had aimed at, namely the 'amelioration of mankind'. However, he seems to have noticed that Wordsworth was 'sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness' through his attachment to the autobiographical work. On 12 October 1799 Coleridge wrote again to Wordsworth, and said, 'I long to see what you have been doing. O let it be the tail-piece of "The Recluse!" for of nothing but "The Recluse" can I hear patiently'(*CL*, I, 538). The fact was that no piece of *The Recluse* had yet been composed.

In reply to Coleridge's letters Wordsworth concludes the second part of the Two-Part *Prelude* by saying, 'we by different roads at length have gained /The self-same bourne'(II, 498-9). He seems to require no more help or encouragement from Coleridge, who has 'sought /The truth in solitude'(II, 505-6) since he left England in September 1798. 'Fare thee well!', Wordsworth says to Coleridge

> Health and the quiet of a healthful mind
> Attend thee, seeking oft the haunts of men —
> But yet more often living with thyself,
> And for thyself — so haply shall thy days

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[24] *CL*, I, 527. Coleridge to Wordsworth, 10 September 1799.

Be many, and a blessing to mankind.
(The Two-Part *Prelude*, II, 509 - 514)

In late October 1799 Wordsworth at last had a reunion with Coleridge. However, the concluding lines of the second part suggest that Wordsworth may have regarded it as almost unlikely that he and Coleridge would pursue the same end together again. The completion of the Two-Part version of *The Prelude* was not the end of Wordsworth's analysis of the growth of his poet's mind. It was not long after his meeting with Coleridge, in mid November 1799, that Wordsworth began to compose what is now known as the 'Glad Preamble', which was to be incorporated in the Thirteen-Book *Prelude* as the first fifty-four lines of Book I in January 1804.

In the meantime, Wordsworth may have read Dr. Burney's review of *Lyrical Ballads* in *The Monthly Review* for June 1799. Like Southey, Dr. Burney makes severe comments on Wordsworth's poetic experiments. 'Tintern Abbey' is regarded by him as the 'reflections of no common mind; poetical, beautiful, and philosophical: but tinctured with gloomy, narrow, and unsocial ideas of seclusion from the commerce of the world'.[25] Dr. Burney agrees with Southey in saying

> So much genius and originality are discovered in this publication, that we wish to see another from the same hand, written on more elevated subjects and in a more cheerful disposition.[26]

Dr. Burney's comments appear to me to resemble Wordsworth's description of the 'lost man' in 'Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree':

> He was one who own'd
> No common soul. In youth, by genius nurs'd,
> And big with lofty views, he to the world
> Went forth, pure in his heart, against the taint
> Of dissolute tongues, 'gainst jealousy, and hate,
> And scorn, against all enemies prepared,
> All but neglect: and so, his spirit damped
> At once, with rash disdain he turned away,
> And with the food of pride sustained his soul
> In solitude.
> ('Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree', 12 - 21)

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[25] *The Monthly Review*, vol. xxix (June 1799); quoted from *LB*(Brett and Jones), p.323.
[26] ibid., p. 323.

Composing the 'Lines' early in 1797, Wordsworth may have been proud to distinguish himself from the 'lost man' who 'would sigh /With mournful joy, to think that others felt /What he must never feel'('Lines', 38-40). However, Dr. Burney's review suggests that Wordsworth appears to some readers to be another sort of 'lost man', who feels what others must never feel.

There is no record to consider how Wordsworth thought of Dr. Burney's review, but I agree with Gordon Thomas, who says that Wordsworth may well have regarded the 'assumption of uniqueness and eliteness, of uncommonness' as 'most objectionable' in Dr. Burney's review.[27] In addition, called by Dr. Burney a poet of 'no common mind', Wordsworth may have recollected the 'interminable building', which he had reared in the vacancy between the past and the present by 'observation of affinities /In Objects where no brotherhood exist[ed] /To common minds'(The Two-Part *Prelude*, II, 432-5). Having noticed the difference between his mind and 'common minds', Wordsworth seems to have become anxious about the reader's reaction to his poetic experiments: Is it possible for the reader to feel the 'sense sublime' in 'Tintern Abbey'? Does 'Simon Lee' encourage the reader to 'find /A tale in every thing'('Simon Lee', 75-6)? Does the reader receive from Nature an 'impulse' to learn 'more of man' and '[o]f moral evil and of good'('The Tables Turned', 21-3)? He was most certainly disappointed to know that even the man of literary talents, Dr. Burney, rarely understood his experiments in encouraging the reader's creative engagement with that which was suggestively unresolved. He presumably found it necessary to reconsider his duty as a poet as well as his method of the enlightenment of the reader.

Wordsworth and Dorothy concluded the year 1799 by moving into Dove Cottage at the secluded village of Grasmere in the Lake District. Having spent some days at Dove Cottage, they wrote to Coleridge and expressed their first impressions of the people of 'various occupations' at and around Grasmere:

> The manners of the neighbouring cottagers have far exceeded our expectations; They seem little adulterated . .

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[27] Gordon Kent Thomas, *Wordsworth and the Motions of the Mind* (New York: P. Lang, 1989), p. 131 (hereafter referred to as 'Thomas').

> . The people we have uniformly found kind-hearted and manly, prompt to serve without servility.[28]

Recollecting the lower class at and around Racedown, who were 'wretchedly poor', 'ignorant and overwhelmed with every vice that usually attend[ed] ignorance in the class',[29] the Wordsworths had so far found in their neighbours 'no reason whatever to complain'(*EY*, 275). Even living in seclusion, Wordsworth may have regarded it as possible to maintain a common mind through his contacts with the middle and lower classes.

It was at the beginning of the year 1800 that Wordsworth at last embarked on *The Recluse*. First, he completed some eighty lines, which were to be the 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, then proceeded to compose the first book, which is now known as *Home at Grasmere*. Johnston says that in the 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse* Wordsworth projects 'his best image of himself', namely 'a poet-prophet-philosopher, whose words will speak to all people everywhere about everything: Nature, Society, and individual consciousness'.[30] In fact, Wordsworth states in the 'Prospectus', 'I would give utterance in numerous verses'.[31] However, quoting Milton, 'fit audience let me find, though few!',[32] Wordsworth does not aim to 'speak to all people'. Who does he think of as fit for his projected 'numerous verses' '[o]n man, on Nature, and on human life'?[33] In the first book of *The Recluse* Wordsworth says

> I look for a man,
> The common creature of the brotherhood,
> But little differing from the man elsewhere
> For selfishness and envy and revenge
> (Ill neighbourhood! — folly that this should be),
> Flattery and double-dealing, strife and wrong.
> (*Home at Grasmere*, 433 - 438)

Among his neighbouring middle and lower classes Wordsworth finds no fit audience for his composition. He concludes

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[28] *EY*, 275. Wordsworth and Dorothy to Coleridge, 24 and 27 December 1799.
[29] *EY*, 154. Wordsworth to Mathews, 20 and 24 October 1795.
[30] Johnston, *Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 560.
[31] William Wordsworth, The 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, 13; *Home at Grasmere*, 963.
[32] The 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, 23; *Home at Grasmere*, 972. See *PW*, V, 372n. The quotation is from Milton's address to Urania in *Paradise Lost*, vii, 30-1, 'still govern thou my Song /Urania, and fit audience find, though few.'
[33] The 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, 1; *Home at Grasmere*, 959.

Then farewell to the warrior's deeds, farewell
All hope, which once and long was mine, to fill
The heroic trumpet with the muse's breath!
Yet in this peaceful vale we will not spend
Unheard-of days, though loving peaceful thoughts;
A voice will speak, and what will be the theme?
(*Home at Grasmere*, 953 - 958)

In mid September 1799 Coleridge asked Wordsworth to address *The Recluse* to 'those, who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, [had] thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and [were] sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness'(*CL*, I, 527). However, *Home at Grasmere* suggests that in spring 1800 Wordsworth decided to retreat from the scheme for 'the amelioration of mankind' by literary means, which had preoccupied him as early as the beginning of the *Philanthropist* scheme in May 1794. What, then, will be the 'theme' for his future composition? What is his renewed duty as a poet? Who will his 'voice' speak to? All of his questions are left unanswered in *Home at Grasmere*.

Soon after the completion of *Home at Grasmere*, on 6 April 1800, Coleridge paid his first visit to Dove Cottage. He may have known little about Wordsworth's preoccupation with *The Recluse* in the last three months, for he said in his letter of February, 'I grieve that "The Recluse" sleeps'(*CL*, I, 575). In a letter to Thomas Poole of 21 March 1800 Coleridge regarded Wordsworth as so 'great' as to say, 'since Milton no man has *manifested* himself equal to him'(*CL*, I, 582). One of Coleridge's aims of his visit was, needless to say, to rekindle Wordsworth's enthusiasm for *The Recluse*. He also intended to begin collaborating with Wordsworth on a new two-volume edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. There is no detailed record to suggest what was discussed during Coleridge's stay at Dove Cottage from 6 April to 4 May 1800. However, it seems likely that Wordsworth may have discussed with Coleridge what would be the theme for the second volume, and for whom the new edition of *Lyrical Ballads* would be intended.

By Coleridge's arrival at Dove Cottage on 6 April Wordsworth had already completed 'Hart-Leap Well' and 'The Brothers', both of which were based on his life in the Lake District. Johnston says, 'Wordsworth's new emphasis falls on how communities - or more specifically *pairs* or *couples* as the smallest units of community - can be preserved', which is 'the motor

driving *Home at Grasmere'*.[34] He goes into details about how Wordsworth plans to preserve his home at Grasmere:

> most of the poems actually composed in 1800 deal with the *content*-question of country living - that is to say, with his and Dorothy's everyday experience: intellectual 'cultural workers' setting up business in a region far removed from the cultural capital where such business was normally conducted.[35]

Consequently, as Johnston insists, whereas the Wordsworth of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* aims to encourage the reader to acquire his own aesthetic and ethical code, the Wordsworth of the 1800 two-volume edition intends to demonstrate 'the proper way to live among simple people in the country, which is usually explicitly identified as the Lake District'.[36] However, *Home at Grasmere* suggests to me that by the composition of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth may have already abandoned his hope of setting up the self-sufficient secluded community of the 'common creature[s] of the brotherhood'(*Home at Grasmere,* 434). What he hoped to preserve was, I think, his home consisting of himself and Dorothy, though still looking for men of common thought and feeling.

Concluding his stay at Dove Cottage on 4 May 1800, Coleridge was convinced that Wordsworth '[would] never quit the North of England'(*CL*, I, 582). To join Wordsworth's community, Coleridge brought his wife and son to Dove Cottage on 29 June 1800 and stayed with the Wordsworths until 23 July, when he moved into Greta Hall at Keswick, twelve miles away from Grasmere. In their West Country period they had frequently taken a three-mile walk between Alfoxden and Nether Stowey. There was, in fact, more distance between Grasmere and Keswick, but the gap between Wordsworth's poetic, social, and philosophical principles and Coleridge's was more crucial for their relationship. Beer suggests that while discussing the new edition of *Lyrical Ballads,* Wordsworth and Coleridge gradually noticed that both their 'mutual stimulus' of the West Country period and the 'excitement' of the first edition had 'already begun to diminish'.[37] Beer focuses in particular on the difference of their religious belief, for

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[34] Johnston, 'Wordsworth's Self-Creation and the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 98.
[35] Johnston, 'Wordsworth's Self-Creation and the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 99.
[36] Johnston, 'Wordsworth's Self-Creation and the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*', pp. 98-9.
[37] Beer, 'The Unity of *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 21.

Wordsworth's 'most central belief' was no longer in the Coleridgean 'One Life' but in the 'one human heart'(The Old Cumberland Beggar', 146).[38]

Although not mentioned by Beer, Coleridge, I think, had the chance to detect Wordsworth's belief in the 'one human heart' while reading 'The Brothers, a Pastoral Poem' during his stay at Dove Cottage from 6 April to 4 May 1800. 'The Brothers' begins with the encounter of the 'homely Priest of Ennerdale'(16) with the 'Stranger'(36) - later known to the reader as 'Leonard'(116), the missing brother of the dead boy James - in the churchyard. The Stranger wonders why 'the dead man's home /Is but a fellow to that pasture field'(170-1). The Priest explains

> We have no need of names and epitaphs,
> We talk about the dead by our fire-sides.
> And then for our immortal part, *we* want
> No symbols, Sir, to tell us their plain tale:
> The thought of death sits easy on the man
> Who has been born and dies among the mountains.
> ('The Brothers', 176 - 181)

The Priest insists on the 'immortal part' of the human heart, which is shared by those who have been born and die in the parish. Leonard replies, 'Your dalesmen, then, do in each other's thoughts /Posses a kind a second life'(182-3). He understands that in the community of Ennerdale there is the close relationship of individuals, both living and dead. Unlike Coleridge's belief in the 'One Life', Wordsworth's belief in the unity of Nature, Man, and the small unit of society needs no notion of the divine or of heaven.

Wordsworth's treatment of the 'Being' is also found in 'Hart-Leap Well', which was composed along with *Home at Grasmere* and 'The Brothers'. The narrator concludes the tale of the Hart and the Knight Sir Walter by saying

> This beast not unobserv'd by Nature fell,
> His death was mourn'd by sympathy divine.
> The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
> That is in the green leaves among the groves,
> Maintains a deep and reverential care

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[38] Beer, 'The Unity of *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 21. For the date of composition of 'The Old Cumberland Beggar', see *Cornell LB*, 228. 'The Old Cumberland Beggar'(published in the second volume of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*) had been completed by 5 March 1798, and was revised between 26 November and 17 December 1799.

For them the quiet creatures whom he loves.
('Hart-Leap Well', 163 - 168)

In addition to the 'deep and reverential care' of the 'Being', 'Nature, in due course of time, once more /Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom'(171-2). 'Hart-Leap Well' concludes with '[o]ne lesson'(177):

. . . let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shews, and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.
('Hart-Leap Well', 177 - 80)

'Nature' may teach us more 'both by what she shews, and what conceals' than the 'Being' does by what he conceals. The 'Being' in 'Hart-Leap Well' seems to me to be neither the Coleridgean 'One Life' nor the 'one human heart'(The Old Cumberland Beggar', 146) but what is called in the Two-Part *Prelude* the 'being'(I, 122) or the 'sublimity'(II, 367), which Wordsworth can describe only as a 'dim and undetermined sense /Of unknown modes'(I, 121-2) or an 'obscure sense'(II, 366). The concluding lines in 'Hart-Leap Well' suggest that Wordsworth no longer shared religious belief or social and philosophical ideals with Coleridge.

'The Brothers' and 'Hart-Leap Well' also demonstrate the change in Wordsworth's poetic principles, in particular his attitude towards the reader. Stephen Parrish asserts that while composing the poems for the second volume of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth became so '[a]nxious to assure the sale of his poems' as to make his 'dramatic and narrative techniques' more 'objective and "traditional" in form'.[39] 'Hart-Leap Well' appears to Parrish to represent a 'maturing of certain techniques of the earlier "lyrical ballads"', though also representing an 'abandonment of others, more daring and more original'.[40] In addition, unlike the poems in the first volume, 'Hart-leap Well', I think, offers the reader's expected subject-matter in easily digestible form as well as in 'objective' and 'traditional' form, namely the lesson; 'Never to blend our pleasure or our pride /With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels'('Hart-leap Well', 179-80). In 'The Brothers', as Parrish suggests, the characters' feelings are visible to the reader 'through dramatic implication' and 'in muted understatement'

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[39] Parrish, 'Dramatic Technique in the *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 95.
[40] ibid., p. 96.

rather than through direct speech.[41] He says that the 'rich dramatic irony' makes 'The Brothers' 'more sophisticated than the earlier complaints and dramatic monologues' in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*.[42] I would rather suggest that saying, 'from the weakness of his heart /[Leonard] had not dared to tell [the Priest] who he was'('The Brothers', 428-9), Wordsworth seems to allow the reader neither to go into the inner dimensions of the characters nor to judge the poem with his own ethical code. Wordsworth's 'sophisticated' dramatic and narrative techniques, I think, rarely require the reader's interpretation.

Since Coleridge's departure from Grasmere of 4 May 1800, Wordsworth had been rearranging and revising the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* as the first volume of a new edition while composing the poems for the second volume. In the meantime, Coleridge arranged to print a new two-volume edition of *Lyrical Ballads* with the Bristol firm of Biggs & Cottle.[43] On 29 June Coleridge came to Dove Cottage and discussed the details about the new edition with Wordsworth. In mid July 1800 they provided Biggs and Cottle with the proposed changes in the poems in the first volume. The first poem of the 1798 edition, Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere', is replaced with Wordsworth's poems concerning moral philosophy, 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned'. In the new edition 'Old Man Travelling' is entitled 'Animal Tranquillity and Decay, a Sketch', and 'Anecdote for Fathers' is subtitled, 'shewing how the Practice of Lying may be taught'.[44] Wordsworth seems to leave little or no room for the reader's interpretation by demonstrating the purposes of the poems of the first volume even in the orders and titles.

Wordsworth aimed to express the purpose of the new edition even on the title page of the new edition. On 13 August 1800 he suggested to Biggs and Cottle, 'The Title Page must stand thus

Lyrical Ballads
with other poems
By. W. Wordsworth
Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum
2nd Edition —' (*EY*, 293)

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[41] ibid., p. 96.
[42] ibid., p. 96.
[43] See *EY*, 283n.-284n.
[44] *EY*, 285, 287. Wordsworth to Biggs and Cottle, mid July 1800.

The Latin epigraph translates, 'How utterly unsuited to your taste, Papinianus'. As the most likely figure for 'Papinianus' Johnston points to Sir James Mackintosh, who should be blamed for 'his embarrassingly public recantation of his former sympathies for the ideals of the French Revolution, in his 1799 lectures on "The Law of Nature and of Nations"'.[45] The implicit 'slap' at Mackintosh appears to Johnston to express implicitly the purpose of the new edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, namely a 'convert programme of cultural warfare waged against established moral systems and political powers as well as literary ones, carrying on politics by other means'.[46] The Latin epigraph seems to me to reflect the 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, in which Wordsworth says, 'fit audience let me find, though few!'(23), rather than his enthusiasm for the reform movement of the 1790s. In the new edition Wordsworth seems to intend not to encourage any reader to acquire an 'accurate taste in poetry'[47] but to instruct those who have already acquired their own literary tastes to be his ideal 'audience'.

As is suggested in the 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, Wordsworth's views of the likely readers of a new edition of *Lyrical Ballads* derived in part from his observations of his neighbours at Grasmere. In mid September 1800 when Wordsworth was composing the 'Preface' to the new two-volume edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, Dorothy complained in a letter that their lower-class servant was 'very ignorant, very foolish, and very difficult to teach'.[48] What their servant could do was to learn to do everything 'mechanically'.[49] The 'Preface' to the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* treats '[l]ow and rustic life' as an ideal state in which the 'essential passions of the heart' are conveyed in 'simple and unelaborated expressions'.[50] Nevertheless Wordsworth became more fully aware of the limitation of the lower-class labourers' intellectual abilities. They might be able to perceive the 'beautiful and permanent forms of nature',[51] though not to receive any 'impulse' from Nature to learn '[o]f moral evil and of good'.[52] Although not explicitly mentioned in the 'Preface', the lower-class labourers are excluded from Wordsworth's intended readers of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*.

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[45] Johnston, 'Wordsworth's Self-Creation and the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 112.
[46] Johnston, 'Wordsworth's Self-Creation and the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 112.
[47] The 'Advertisement', 739.
[48] *EY*, 296. Dorothy to Jane Marshall, 10 and 12 September 1800.
[49] *EY*, 296.
[50] The 1800 'Preface', 743.
[51] The 1800 'Preface', 743-4.
[52] See 'The Tables Turned', 21-4.

Who, then, does Wordsworth describe in the 'Preface' as 'fit audience' for the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*? He insists that he wrote the 'Preface' without 'the selfish and foolish hope of *reasoning* [the Reader] into an approbation of [the] Poems'(The 1800 'Preface', 742). However, the fact is that much space in the 'Preface' is devoted to reasoning the reader into an approbation of a 'worthy *purpose*' in the delineation of 'the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the general and simple affections of our nature'(The 1800 'Preface', 744-5). For example, we are required to find in 'We Are Seven' 'the perplexity and obscurity which in childhood attend our notion of death, or rather our utter inability to admit that notion'(The 1800 'Preface', 745). 'Simon Lee' shows the reader 'the way of receiving from ordinary moral sensations another and more salutary impression'(The 1800 'Preface', 745). Referring to 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill', Wordsworth says

> I wished to draw attention to the truth that the power of the human imagination is sufficient to produce such changes even in our physical nature as might almost appear miraculous. (The 1800 'Preface', 757)

The 1798 edition encourages the reader to try out his psychological analysis in considering the reason why Harry Gill finds no means to stop himself shivering with cold. The 1800 edition, on the contrary, leaves little room for the reader's interpretation.

Furthermore Wordsworth is so anxious to replace the 'pre-established codes of decision' with the aesthetic and ethical codes of *Lyrical Ballads* as to state

> it is proper that I should mention one other circumstance which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling. (The 1800 'Preface', 746)

He proudly says, ' My meaning will be rendered perfectly intelligible by referring my Reader to . . . the last Stanza of ['Childless Father']:

> Perhaps to himself at that moment he said,
> "The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead,"
> But of this in my ears not a word did he speak,
> And he went to the chace with a tear on his cheek.

('The Childless Father', 17 - 20)

In the 1798 edition Wordsworth asks the reader to 'kindly' think of Simon Lee's feeling in his 'tears'[53] whereas in the 'Preface' he seems to force the reader to 'perfectly' understand the father's grief in the 'intelligible' description of the 'tear on his cheek'(20). Wordsworth's attitude towards the reader, I think, is not distinguished from the 'popular Poetry of the day'(The 1800 'Preface', 746) like magazine verse, which, according to Glen, aimed to lead the reader to share the poet's thoughts and feelings.[54]

The 'Preface' also expresses Wordsworth's authoritarian mode of instruction, which seems to me to be similar to the rigid didacticism in one of the popular literary works of the day, namely religious and moral tracts. For instance, while the 'Advertisement' to the 1798 edition asks the reader to consider how each poem deals with the 'human passions, human characters, and human incidents', the 'Preface' insists that the new two-volume edition contains 'the most valuable object of all writing whether in prose or verse', namely 'the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature'(The 1800 'Preface', 754). 'I have one request to make of my Reader', Wordsworth says in the 'Preface' by almost echoing the 'Advertisement', in judging the first and second volumes of *Lyrical Ballads* each reader should not follow the 'judgment of others' but 'abide independently by his own feelings'(759). However, what he requires the reader to do is to understand the purpose of each poem, which is calculated by himself to be 'in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations'(760). The 'Preface' concludes with Wordsworth's request for the reader's favourable judgement of a 'worthy *purpose*'(744) of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*:

> From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I have proposed to myself: he will determine how far I have attained this object; and, what is much more important question, whether it be worth attaining; and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the public. (The 1800 'Preface', 760)

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53 'Simon Lee', 78, 97.
54 Glen, p. 35.

The answers to the questions are 'rendered perfectly intelligible'(746) throughout the 'Preface'. I agree with Johnston, who regards the 'Preface' as Wordsworth's 'introduction of himself as an ideal Poet-figure, and of his views on poetry' in relation not to either volume of *Lyrical Ballads* but to *The Recluse* and *The Prelude*.[55] Johnston says that the 'Preface' is spoken in a voice 'at once aggressive and defensive', for Wordsworth is 'convinced of the purity of his goals and motives, but unsure of the arguments he is using to defend them, and of the audience to which he is speaking'.[56] Wordsworth's voice is, I think, sometimes authoritarian and didactic, for he is convinced of his aim at the progress of human improvement, but unsure of the reader's ability of understanding the purpose of each poem.

The poems composed after the 'Preface' seem to more clearly reflect Wordsworth's attempt at '*reasoning*' the reader into an approbation of the poems (The 1800 'Preface', 742). 'Poems on the Naming of Places'(three of the five poems, I, III, and IV, were composed chiefly in October 1800) begin with the 'Advertisement'(composed at Keswick, 15 - 17 October 1800):

> By Persons resident in the country and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little Incidents will have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar Interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such Incidents or renew the gratification of such Feelings, Names have been given to Places by the Author and some of his Friends . . .

Johnston refers to 'Poems on the Naming of Places' as the marked examples of Wordsworth's '*content*-question of country living - that is to say, with his and Dorothy's everyday experience: intellectual 'cultural workers' setting up business in a region far removed from the cultural capital where such business was normally conducted'.[57] Wordsworth's 'Advertisement' to the 'Poems' suggests that his fellow 'intellectual "cultural workers"' include his 'Friends' - Coleridge, Mary Hutchinson, and her sister Joanna. The reader is allowed not to join the cultural circle of 'the Author and some of his Friends' but to learn how their 'private and peculiar Interest' gives 'importance' to the places. For example, the fourth poem shows the reader

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[55] Johnston, 'Wordsworth's Self-Creation and the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 110.
[56] Johnston, 'Wordsworth's Self-Creation and the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 114.
[57] Johnston, 'Wordsworth's Self-Creation and the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*', p. 98. For Johnston's detailed discussion of the 'Poems', see pp. 110-4.

how the place is named after the feeling which Wordsworth, Dorothy, and Coleridge share. Like 'Simon Lee', the poem deals with their encounter with a 'Man /Attir'd in peasant's garb'(50-1). First, they regard him as an 'idle man'(57), but soon discover that he is '[t]oo weak to labour in the harvest field'(69). Whereas 'Simon Lee' asks the 'gentle reader' to 'kindly' think why the 'gratitude' of Simon Lee left the poet 'mourning',[58] the poem concludes

> I will not say
> What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
> The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
> With all its lovely images, was chang'd
> To serious musing and to self-reproach.
> . . . .
> — Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
> My friend, Myself, and She who then receiv'd
> The same admonishment, have called the place
> By a memorial name . . .
> And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the name it bears.
> ('Poems on the Naming of Places', IV, 72 - 86)

Just as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Dorothy expect the 'place' to remind themselves of the 'admonishment'(82), the reader should learn the poet's 'admonishment' whenever he reads the poem on 'POINT RASH-JUDGMENT'(86). The reader, therefore, needs neither to feel kindness to the old man nor to kindly consider their rash judgment.

'Poems on the Naming of Places' reflect not only Wordsworth's authoritarian attitude towards the reader but also his dominance over Coleridge. In early October 1800 Wordsworth asked Biggs and Cottle to add to the 'Preface' the following paragraph:

> It is proper to inform the Reader that the Poems entitled the ancient Mariner, the Foster Mother's Tale, the Nightingale, the Dungeon, and Love, are written by a friend, who has also furnished me with a few of those Poems in the second volume, which are classed under the title of "Poems on the Naming of Places."[59]

The account of Coleridge's contribution to 'Poems on the Naming of Places' was, however, later omitted by Wordsworth from the 'Preface'. The part

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[58] 'Simon Lee', 75, 78, 103-4.

[59] *EY*, 304-5. Wordsworth to Biggs and Cottle, 6 or 7 October, 1800.

furnished by Coleridge was left unnamed. Even Coleridge himself was known to the reader only as the 'friend' of the author of the two-volume edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. On 18 December 1800 Wordsworth said in a letter to Longman and Rees, 'the Style of [Coleridge's 'Christabel'] was so 'discordant from my own that it could not be printed along with my poems with any propriety'(*EY*, 309), and suggested

> I had other poems by me of my own which would have been sufficient for our purpose but some of them being connected with political subjects I judged that they would be injurious to the sale of the Work. (*EY*, 309)

Although none of Coleridge's contributions was closely connected with political subjects, his previous career as a radical reformist might be 'injurious to the sale of the Work'. What Wordsworth planned to replace 'Christabel' with was his 'Michael: a Pastoral', which would be 'highly serviceable to the Sale'(*EY*, 309).

Composed after the 'Preface', 'Michael' is, I think, also 'highly serviceable' to Wordsworth's aim at teaching the reader 'the most valuable object of all writing whether in prose or verse', namely 'the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature'(The 1800 'Preface', 754). In the concluding paragraph of the 'Preface' Wordsworth says, 'from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I have proposed to myself'(760). Even from a 'perusal' of the first several stanzas of 'Michael' the reader clearly perceives the narrator's 'passions' and his views of 'the entire world of nature':

> . . . hence this Tale, while I was yet a boy
> Careless of books, yet having felt the power
> Of Nature, by the gentle agency
> Of natural objects led me on to feel
> For passions that were not my own, and think
> At random and imperfectly indeed
> On man, the heart of man, and human life.
> ('Michael', 27 - 33)

Wordsworth almost echoes the title of his projected poem, '*The Recluse or views of Nature, Man, and Society*', which, he said in a letter of 11 March 1798, 'I hope to make of considerable utility'(*EY*, 214). In this sense, 'Michael' seems to me to be 'highly serviceable' to Wordsworth's future project. In

addition, 'Michael' clarifies the 'utility' of Wordsworth's views of Nature, Man, and Society:

> although it be a history
> Homely and rude, I will relate the same
> For the delight of a few natural hearts,
> And with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
> Of youthful Poets, who among these Hills
> Will be my second Self when I am gone.
> ('Michael', 34 - 39)

Just as Wordsworth says in the 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, 'fit audience let me find, though few!',[60] the narrator intends to relate the story of Michael '[f]or the delight of a few natural hearts' in the hope of instructing 'youthful Poets' to be his 'second Self'. The narrator's words, I think, also contribute to the 'delight' of those who remember the Latin epigraph on the title page of the 1800 edition, 'Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum'('How utterly unsuited to your taste, Papinianus'). Some likely figures of 'natural hearts' are documented in Wordsworth's letter of 18 December 1800 to the publishers concerning 'Michael':

> The Lyrical Ballads are written upon a theory professedly new, and on principles which many persons will be unwilling to admit. I think therefore there would be a propriety in your sending a few copies to the amount of half a dozen or so to persons of eminence either in Letters or in the state. (*EY*, 310)

Wordsworth seems to intend to find his ideal readers among men and women of talents such as Charles James Fox, the Duchess of Devonshire, William Wilberforce, and Anna Latitia Barbauld.[61]

On 14 January 1801 Wordsworth sent a complimentary copy of the two-volume edition of *Lyrical Ballads* with his letter to Charles James Fox, who, he thought, was not only a person of eminence in the state but also a man of 'a constant pre-dominance of sensibility of heart'(*EY*, 313). Wordsworth's letter enlarges upon the 'Preface' by going into details about 'Michael' and 'The Brother'. The two poems, Wordsworth believes, so successfully deal with the importance of 'the domestic affections among the lower orders of society'(*EY*, 313) for their 'spirit of independence' that they

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[60] The 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, 23.
[61] See *EY*, 312n.

may 'excite profitable sympathies in many kind and good hearts' and 'enlarge our feelings of reverence for our species, and our knowledge of human nature'(*EY*, 314-5). So he suggests to Fox

> the two poems might co-operate, however feebly, with the illustrious efforts which you have made to stem this and other evils with which the country is labouring . . . (*EY*, 315)

In saying so, Wordsworth seems to lead Fox to be his 'second Self'('Michael', 39), who would propagate his moral, social, and philosophical instruction.

Although overlooked by Ernest de Selincourt and C. L. Shaver, Wordsworth's letter to Fox contains the quotation from Quintilian,[62] which appeared on the title page of the 1802 and 1805 editions of *Lyrical Ballads*. The Latin quotation translates as follows:

> For it is feeling and force of imagination that make us eloquent; it is for this reason that even the uneducated have no difficulty in finding words to express their meaning, if only they are stirred by some strong emotion.[63]

The quotation seems to insist on the utility of the *Lyrical Ballads* poems for 'the illustrious efforts' which Fox had made to stem the 'evils' with which 'the uneducated' were labouring. Wordsworth's letter to Fox, I think, reflects his conviction that the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* would be 'in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations'(The 1800 'Preface', 760).

O'Neill suggests that in the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* the Latin quotation 'prepares us for the poet's simultaneous expectation that the reader should grasp the underlying emotion and that he or she may well not do so'.[64] In addition, the Latin quotation appears to me to prepare the reader for Wordsworth's expectation that he or she should understand the underlying purpose of his selection of language:

> the language of such Poetry as I am recommending is, as far as possible, a selection of the language really spoken

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[62] See *EY*, 315, 315n. There is no reference to the 1802 and 1805 editions.
[63] William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. Michael Mason (London, 1992), p. 94 .
[64] O'Neill, '*Lyrical Ballads* and Pre-Established Codes of Decision', p. 127.

> by men; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind.[65]

Wordsworth insists that the 'selection of the language really spoken by men' is made such 'true taste and feeling' as to 'entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life'. Although not mentioned by Wordsworth, the poems in the first volume seem to be expected to 'form a distinction' far greater than was imagined in 1798 and to be 'sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind'. The 1802 edition is, I think, intended more precisely to educate 'a few natural hearts'('Michael', 36) and a few rational minds to be Wordsworth's 'second Self'('Michael', 39), or in terms of the 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, 'fit audience . . . though few'.[66]

Having explained his selection of language, Wordsworth, like in *The Prelude*, asks himself rather than the reader, 'What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him?'(The 1802 'Preface', 751) 'A Poet', he states, should be 'a man speaking to men'(751), who is 'endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm, and tenderness . . . a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind'(751). He seems to demonstrate his close relationship with the reader by insisting that the Poet should be a man 'singing a song in which all human beings join with him'(752) and having in his qualities 'nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree'(753). However, in the next sentence he says

> the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. (The 1802 'Preface', 753)

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[65] The part added to the 'Preface' in 1802; *Cornell LB*, 750 (hereafter referred to as 'The 1802 'Preface'').

[66] The 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, 23.

This is, I think, the first announcement of the theme of *The Prelude*, which had preoccupied Wordsworth since the composition of the 'Was It For This' draft' in October 1798, namely his best image of himself as a Poet, who is distinguished from the mass of mankind both by the quality and effectiveness of the motions of his mind and by the quantity of his thoughts. He is proud to speak to the readers, 'Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men'(The 1802 'Preface', 754), for no one can go beyond 'the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life'(750) without the Poet's guidance. Wordsworth concludes the expanded part of the 'Preface' by stating that as a 'Poet' he would 'descend' from the 'height' and 'excite rational sympathy' by demonstrating 'the spirit of the passions of men'(754). He seems to echo the second part of the Two-Part *Prelude*, in which he described himself as a poet and 'agent of the one great mind'(The Two-Part *Prelude*, II, 302) delivering the 'never-failing principle of joy /And purest passion'(II, 495-6) to the reader's mind. Although not having revised the poems much, Wordsworth seems to expect that the Latin quotation and the expanded part of the 'Preface' may achieve his aim as an 'agent of the one great mind'(II, 302) by persuading those of 'rational sympathy' to be instructed by the 1802 *Lyrical Ballads*.

What is, then, Wordsworth's aim in delivering his definition of a Poet as 'a man speaking to men' to the public in June 1802? It seems to me that having spent almost two years and a half in the seclusion of Grasmere, Wordsworth may have become anxious to confirm his connection with and utility for society. In addition, in spring and summer 1802 he was fully preoccupied with his domestic affairs, such as his first meeting with his daughter Caroline in Calais and his plan to marry Mary Hutchinson. Some three years previously, in September 1799, Coleridge reminded Wordsworth of his duty as a poet speaking to mankind by saying

> I wish you would write a poem, in blank verse, addressed to those, who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and are sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness, disguising the same under the soft titles of domestic attachment and contempt for visionary *philosophes*. (*CL*, I, 527)

Whether recollecting Coleridge's letter or not, Wordsworth may have intended to avoid 'sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness, disguising the same under the soft titles of domestic attachment'. To do so, he may

have regarded it as necessary to demonstrate his unchanging hope of 'the amelioration of mankind' and the utility of the 1802 *Lyrical Ballads* for it. However, the expanded part of the 'Preface' seems to reflect Wordsworth's turn to 'selfishness' in his method of achieving 'the amelioration of mankind'. The Wordsworth of the 1802 *Lyrical Ballads* is no longer the poet-preceptor of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* encouraging each reader to achieve his potential, or the pedant of the 1800 edition insisting on a worthy purpose of each poem being fully understood. He is almost like a prophet delivering from the 'height' the foundation of a virtuous society like 'rational sympathy' and 'the spirit of the passions of men'(The 1802 'Preface', 754). The 1802 *Lyrical Ballads* suggests that Wordsworth had grown too far apart from 'the multitude' to 'put into each man's hand a lantern to guide him' to 'the welfare of mankind'.[67]

At the beginning of 1800 Wordsworth said

> Then farewell to the warrior's deeds, farewell
> All hope, which once and long was mine, to fill
> The heroic trumpet with the muse's breath!
> Yet in this peaceful vale we will not spend
> Unheard-of days, though loving peaceful thoughts;
> A voice will speak, and what will be the theme?
> (*Home at Grasmere*, 953 - 958)

The 1802 *Lyrical Ballads* suggests that Wordsworth had not yet abandoned his 'theme' of the amelioration of mankind, though having almost abandoned his 'hope' of sharing his 'thoughts' with the readers. To whom, then, will Wordsworth deliver his 'voice'? Soon after having handed in the copy of the third edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in April 1802, Wordsworth found the person who was entitled to hear his 'voice'. It was the seventeen-year-old John Wilson, who was to be well-known as Christopher North for his favourable reviews in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* of Wordsworth's works. In a letter to Wordsworth of May 1802 Wilson says

> Your instructions have afforded me inexpressible pleasure; it will be my own fault if I do not reap from them much advantage.[68]

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[67] See *EY*, 124. Wordsworth's letter of 8 June 1794 concerning the *Philanthropist* scheme.
[68] John Wilson to Wordsworth, May 1802; quoted from *LB*(Brett and Jones), p. 334.

What he has reaped from the *Lyrical Ballads* poems are 'the effect which the qualities of external Nature have in forming the human mind', 'the enjoyment resulting from the cultivation of the social affections or our nature', and 'convictions of immortality'.[69] However, in 'The Idiot Boy' he has not found any instruction or advantage but felt 'displeased' with the poet's 'performance'.[70]

Wordsworth's reply to Wilson of 7 June 1802 begins by saying, 'I was pleas'd to find that I had given so much pleasure to an ingenuous and able mind'(*EY*, 353). As for Wilson's criticism of 'The Idiot Boy', Wordsworth says, 'please whom? or what?'(*EY*, 355). His answer is 'human nature, as it has been [and eve]r will be'(*EY*, 355). He continues to explain that the 'human nature' which his poems have intended and will intend to please can be found among 'men who [ha]ve never known false refinements, wayward and artificial desires, false criti[ci]sms, effeminate habits of thinking and feeling'(*EY*, 355). The 'most to be depended upon' are men 'who, having known these [t]hings, have outgrown them', though 'very small in number'(*EY*, 355). Wordsworth recognizes Wilson's potential of the 'most depended upon', and intends to teach him more about a poet's duty by referring to the part added to the 'Preface' to the forthcoming edition of *Lyrical Ballads*.[71] A 'great Poet', he says, 'ought to a certain degree to rectify men's feelings, to give them new compositions of feeling, to render their feelings more sane pure and permanent, in short, more consonant to nature, that is, to eternal nature'(*EY*, 355). Whereas in the 'Preface' to the 1802 *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth calls a poet 'a man speaking to men'(The 1802 'Preface', 751) and 'singing a song in which all human beings join with him'(752), in a letter to Wilson he insists that a poet 'ought to travel before men occasionally as well as at their sides'(*EY*, 355).

To 'rectify' Wilson's dislike of 'The Idiot Boy', Wordsworth states, 'I must now strictly adopt the plan . . . of setting down a few hints or memorandums, which you will think of for my sake'(*EY*, 356). He says, 'I have often applied to Idiots, in my mind, that sublime expression of stricture that, *"their life is hidden with God"*'(*EY*, 357). He gives Wilson more than 'a few hints or memorandums' by stating that 'The Idiot Boy' demonstrates 'the great triumph of the human heart' and 'the strength, disinterestedness, and grandeur of love'(*EY*, 357). He aims not at inserting 'a stanza

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[69] ibid., pp. 332-3.
[70] ibid., p. 336.
[71] See *Cornell LB*, 32. The 1802 *Lyrical Ballads* was published about 16 June.

describing the Boy [so a]s entirely to separate him in the imagination of [the] Readers from [that] class of idiots who are disgusting in their persons' but at '[lea]ving a deadness upon the feeling'(*EY*, 357-8). Consequently, the feelings in 'The Idiot Boy' are 'such as all men *may* sympathize with'(*EY*, 358). 'This is enough for my purpose', Wordsworth says, and goes into the details about his poetic ideals:

> [It] is not enough for me as a poet, to delineate merely such feelings as all men *do* sympathise with but, it is also highly desirable to add to these others, such as all men *may* sympathize with, and such as there is reason to believe they would be better and more moral beings if they did sympathize with. (*EY*, 358)

The passage seems to enlarge upon the aim of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, namely to encourage each reader to acquire his aesthetic and ethical code through his creative engagement with that which is suggestively unresolved. However, the fact is that the preceding part of the letter explains the poet's feelings so fully as all men '*do* sympathise with'. It seems obvious in his letter that Wordsworth aims to educate Wilson to be a 'better' and 'more moral' being, who may be able to outgrow 'false refinements, wayward and artificial desires, false criti[ci]sms, effeminate habits of thinking and feeling'(*EY*, 354).

A week after the letter to Wilson and some days before the publication of the 1802 *Lyrical Ballads*, on 14 June, Wordsworth wrote to the sister of his fiancé, Sara Hutchinson, who also had shown distaste for 'The Idiot Boy'. Stating, 'everything is tedious when one does not read with the feelings of the Author'(*EY*, 367), Wordsworth seems to be so doctrinaire as to insist on his dogma being interpreted literally. Wordsworth's authoritative voice was heard by only a small number of readers, but it is, I think, fully expressed in the 'Preface' to the 1800 and 1802 editions as well as in the *Lyrical Ballads* poems. Wilson's and Sara Hutchinson's letters may have led Wordsworth to think that none of his readers could share his 'promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement' or his 'power in expressing such thoughts and feelings'(The 1802 'Preface', 753). The turning point in Wordsworth's ideals of poetic education was, I think, the composition of *The Prelude* in October 1798, which recorded his upbringing as a prophet of Nature and thus individuated him from the public. Education remained Wordsworth's principal theme until the end of his life,

though his engagement with the progress of human improvement through the enlightenment of the reader concluded with the publication of the 1802 *Lyrical Ballads*. His discussion of 'What is a Poet?' in the expanded part of the 'Preface' shows what Hazlitt calls 'a departure from, a dereliction of his first principles',[72] which I would like to call Wordsworth's turn towards an authoritarian, and somewhat prophetic mode of indoctrination.

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[72] Hazlitt, XI, pp. 86-7, 90.

Conclusion

Stephen Gill asserts that in his lifetime Wordsworth presented his statements about education to a small number of people through his private letters and *The Prelude*.[1] It was in July 1850 that the posthumous publication of *The Prelude* led contemporary readers to understand how Wordsworth had formed his poetic principles of education from his experience of 'the revolutionary movement' and 'political changes' of the 1790s.[2] The publication of Wordsworth's private letters enables modern critics and biographers to examine the complex and changing nature of his ideals of education throughout his life. However, I hope that this thesis has also called attention to the fact that in the years 1791 – 1802 Wordsworth was most anxious to demonstrate and practise his ideals of education through his political and literary careers. The 1798, 1800, and 1802 editions of *Lyrical Ballads*, as I have discussed, are the fullest expression of Wordsworth's aim at enabling and encouraging the reader to develop his mind and heart, then to promote the progress of human improvement.

I began my study of Wordsworth's ideals of poetic education by tracing the progress of his mind and heart from his early childhood up until his graduation from Cambridge in January 1791. Besides *The Prelude* and Wordsworth's and Dorothy's letters, I scrutinized Wordsworth's composition on education in his Hawkshead period (which was, like *The Prelude*, not published in his lifetime). My first chapter, I hope, highlighted a less well-known aspect of the basis for the poet's belief that the reform of educational systems was necessary for a thoroughgoing reform of society. I also examined Dorothy's letters concerning her teaching at Sunday school and her fostering of her uncle's children, and pointed out Dorothy's contribution to the development of Wordsworth's educational ideals as well as to that of his poetic principles.

In Chapter Two I focused on Wordsworth's political and literary activities in January 1791 - April 1795, and examined how he became aware that the progress of human improvement should be dependent upon a properly educated population. I explored the development of Wordsworth's social, political, and philosophical views not only in his letters and *The Prelude* but also in his unheard political and literary voice, such as his *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, the *Philanthropist* scheme, the revised

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[1] Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 8.
[2] Hazlitt, XI, p. 87.

version of *An Evening Walk*, and *A Night on Salisbury Plain*. My discussion of Wordsworth's abandoned and unpublished works on education, I hope, explained what is not mentioned in his letters and *The Prelude*, namely why and how Wordsworth became sceptical about Godwin's principles concerning the reform of society by means of reason and benevolence.

In Chapter Three I scrutinized Wordsworth's engagement with educational principles and practices in spring 1795 - July 1797 by referring to Basil Montagu's *Autobiographical Notebook* (Dove Cottage manuscript) and the Pinneys' family letters and account books (University of Bristol Archives). I suggested that Wordsworth's turn from Godwin's rational principles to his own ideals of the welfare of society through the happiness of individuals may be seen as the result of his instruction of Montagu, his fostering of little Basil, and his discussions of education with the Pinney family. I traced the development of Wordsworth's ideals of poetic education in his poems of this period, such as *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, 'The Baker's Cart', 'Old Man Travelling', and 'Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree'.

Chapter Four was a detailed biographical approach to Wordsworth's social and literary activities in July 1797 - September 1798. I considered how Wordsworth elaborated his ideals of poetic education through his discussions with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Thelwall, and Tom Wedgwood, and examined how in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* he established himself as a 'poet-preceptor', who aimed to encourage each reader to form his aesthetic and ethical code. I also discussed the influence of Godwin's *Enquirer*, Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, and Thelwall's *Peripatetic* on Wordsworth's conception of poetry and poetics.

In my final chapter I focused on the changes in Wordsworth's educational method from September 1798 until the publication of the second two-volume edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in June 1802. I suggested that since October 1798 Wordsworth had been trying to write an autobiographical poem as a prelude to *The Recluse* and to thus individuate himself from the public. He became increasingly sceptical about the reader's ability to be enlightened by his poems. The reviews of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* forced Wordsworth to admit that his poetic experiments in the progress of human improvement through the enlightenment of the reader had been misunderstood even by those of literary talents. I discussed the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* as his turn towards an authoritarian, didactic mode of

teaching. I examined the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* as his first announcement of his duty as the poet-prophet, who aimed to 'descend' from the 'height' and to 'excite rational sympathy' by demonstrating 'the spirit of the passions of men'.[3] His letters of June 1802 also demonstrate his turn towards a prophetic mode of instruction, with which he intended 'to rectify men's feelings, to give them new compositions of feeling, to render their feelings more sane pure and permanent'(*EY*, 355). Writing to Wilson and Sarah Hutchinson, Wordsworth became so fully aware of his talents 'differing in kind from other men'[4] as to have 'a departure from, a dereliction of his first principles'[5] of education, which he had constructed since his first contact with the British reform movement in January 1791. In this sense, I have taken June 1802 as the terminal date of my discussion of Wordsworth's engagement with the progress of human improvement through the enlightenment of all social classes.

Education remained one of Wordsworth's principal themes in his later compositions. I would like to discuss briefly how Wordsworth's principles of education after 1802 differ from his first principles. In spring 1805, having seen the successful sale of the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth begins the concluding paragraph in the final book of *The Prelude* by confidently saying

> Oh, yet a few short years of useful life,
> And all will be complete, thy race be run,
> Thy monument of glory will be raised!
> (The 1805 *Prelude*, XIII, 428 - 430)

He is convinced that in the next 'few short years'(428) he will raise the 'monument of glory'(430), which not only he and Coleridge but also Godwin, Thelwall, the Wedgwoods and most of the reformists attempted at in the 1790s, namely 'the amelioration of mankind'.[6] Wordsworth is proud to call himself and Coleridge 'Prophets of nature', who will speak to all human beings a 'lasting inspiration, sanctified /By reason and by truth'(XIII, 442-4). He concludes the 'prelude' to his projected literary 'monument of glory' entitled, *The Recluse*, by demonstrating the duty of 'Prophets of nature':

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[3] The 1802 'Preface', 754.
[4] The 1802 'Preface', 753.
[5] Hazlitt, XI, p. 90.
[6] See *CL*, I, 527. Coleridge to Wordsworth, mid September 1799.

What we have loved
Others will love, and we may teach them how —
Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
On which he dwells, above this frame of things
(Which, mid all revolutions in the hopes
And fears of men, does still remain unchanged)
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of substance and of fabric more divine.
(The 1805 *Prelude*, XIII, 444 - 452)

Referring to this passage, Gordon Thomas emphasizes that unlike 'the typical didacticism', Wordsworth's aim is 'to teach his readers *how* to love, or *how* to think, and not *what* to think'.[7] Meisenhelder develops Thomas's argument by stating that Wordsworth's poetry is 'only indirectly didactic; rather than giv[ing] moral directions for action, it encourages virtue at a deeper level by transforming readers' sensibilities and influencing their feelings and responses'.[8] 'The power of his verse to teach', she says, 'arises not from its abstract moral philosophy or specific maxims but from a more fundamental "in-forming" of the reader, an "instruction" that in the root sense of the word "builds into" one's character those habits of response underlying moral action'.[9] Richard Clancey agrees with Thomas and Meisenhelder that Wordsworth intends to 'arouse even ordinary people to great acts of creativity'.[10] Clancey aims to go beyond Meisenhelder's discussion of 'the way Wordsworth enables readers to respond creatively to *his* texts' by suggesting that 'Wordsworth also would have us attempt texts, or at least pretexts, of our own'.[11]

I agree with Thomas, Meisenhelder, and Clancey that the concluding lines of the Thirteen-Book *Prelude* demonstrate Wordsworth's consistent enthusiasm for the education of the reader. However, there is a change in his attitude towards the reader: while the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* aims to encourage each reader to find a means to achieve his potential, *The Recluse* is intended to 'teach' and 'instruct' all human beings 'how' to feel and think (XIII, 445-6). What Wordsworth expects *The Recluse* to 'build into' the reader's character is 'what [he and Coleridge] have loved'(XIII, 444).

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[7] Thomas, pp. 2-3.
[8] Meisenhelder, p. 8.
[9] Meisenhelder, p. 27.
[10] Clancey, p. 131.
[11] Clancey, p. 197n.

Whether Wordsworth noticed this in 1805 or not, his projected monument would consist of what he had intended to demolish through his political activities and writings like the *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* and the *Philanthropist* scheme, namely the domination of the public by teaching it to lie 'under the feet of *the great*'.[12] *The Recluse* would be based on the poet's 'pre-established' aesthetic and ethical codes, which the 'Advertisement' to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* had aimed to lead the reader to overthrow.[13]

In February 1808 Wordsworth stated in a letter to his friend, George Beaumont, 'Every great Poet is a Teacher'. Saying, 'I wish either to be considered as a Teacher, or as nothing',[14] he seems to have demonstrated his turn to a more authoritarian, didactic mode of poetic education. In 1814 Wordsworth announced his prophetic assurance to the public in the 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*:

> Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'st
> The human Soul of universal earth,
> Dreaming in things to come; and dost possess
> A metropolitan temple in the hearts
> Of mighty Poets: upon me bestow
> A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
> With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
> Shedding benignant influence, and secure,
> Itself, from all malevolent effect
> Of those mutations that extend their sway
> Throughout the nether sphere!
> (The 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, 83 - 93)

What the mighty poet-prophet Wordsworth intends to sing in *The Excursion* and in his future composition is not 'a song in which all human beings join with him'[15] but a song of the 'Intelligence which governs all'.[16] In the grandly Miltonic voice of the 'Prospectus' Wordsworth discusses in Books VIII and IX of *The Excursion* a way in which the 'Intelligence' could govern the lower-class children. His spokesman, the Wanderer, speaks to an 'impassioned majesty'

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[12] William Wordsworth, the *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, *Pr. W.* I, 36.
[13] See the 'Advertisement', 739.
[14] William and Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt, *The Middle Years, 1806 - 1820*, rev. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969-70), I, 195.
[15] The 1802 'Preface', 752.
[16] The 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*, 22.

"O for the coming of that glorious time
When prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this imperial Realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey;
Binding herself by statute to secure
For all the children whom her soil maintains
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth,"[17]

In the West Country period Wordsworth taught little Basil 'nothing . . . but what he learn[ed] from the evidence of his senses' and aimed to make him '*happy*'(*EY*, 180). Now the great poet-teacher-prophet Wordsworth of *The Excursion* insists that a system of national education should train the lower-class children to be obedient and industrious by teaching them '[t]he rudiments of letters' and 'moral and religious truth'. His projected curriculum of national education suggests that Wordsworth aims to promote what he had attacked in the *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, namely the domination of the public by teaching it to lie 'under the feet of *the great*'.[18] In 1814 Wordsworth seems to have shared Burke's belief in the 'entailed inheritance' of rank and intelligence[19] and Godwin's elitism. Unlike the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, *The Excursion* is intended not for all social classes but for those of rank and intelligence.

In August 1822 Wordsworth found the successful result of his poetic education in the review of 'Wordsworth's Sonnets and Memorials'(both published in March 1822) in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* by one of his readers of talents and virtues, John Wilson. As Wordsworth predicted in a letter of June 1802, Wilson seems to have established himself as a 'better' and 'more moral' being, who had outgrown 'false refinements, wayward and artificial desires, false criti[ci]sms, effeminate habits of thinking and feeling'(*EY*, 354). Now as Wordsworth's 'second Self'('Michael', 39), Wilson speaks to the public

> the whole heart and soul of [Wordsworth's] poetry has been poured over human life, to ameliorate and dignify it, to expose error and delusion strip of all their pretences,

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[17] William Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, IX, 292, 293-302.
[18] William Wordsworth, the *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, *Pr. W.* I, 36.
[19] Burke, *Reflections*, p. 173.

> and to shew the foundations of all true national greatness.[20]

Wilson seems to present to the public Wordsworth's private announcement in his letter of June 1802 that a 'great Poet' 'ought to travel before men occasionally as well as at their sides' and 'to a certain degree to rectify men's feelings, to give them new compositions of feeling, to render their feelings more sane pure and permanent'(*EY*, 355). Wilson also seems to refer to the 'Preface' to the 1802 *Lyrical Ballads*, in which Wordsworth calls himself a 'Poet' aiming to 'descend' from the 'height' and to 'excite rational sympathy' by demonstrating 'the spirit of the passions of men'.[21]

Jon P. Klancher insists on the important role of *Blackwood's Magazine* in imagining the expanding mind of the individual reader as the foundation for 'a greater collective self', or, 'a national identity'.[22] In fact, Wilson asserts that Wordsworth's poetry would guide the public to 'all true national greatness'. However, what Wilson calls 'true national greatness' is not the 'identity' created by the nation but the 'human life' ameliorated and dignified by Wordsworth's poetic education. In addition, Wilson justifies Wordsworth's distance from 'all agitating public affairs' and 'the goings-on of governments' by insisting that his seclusion at Grasmere has made him a leader of 'a virtuous society', who holds 'communings with the great spirit of human life'.[23] In the 1820s Wordsworth was admired by readers for what he had aimed to deny throughout the three editions of *Lyrical Ballads*: namely his qualities totally 'differing in kind from other men'.[24] The changing nature of Wordsworth's educational principles since the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* was noticed by one of the pupils of Wordsworth's poetic education, William Hazlitt. In *The Spirit of the Age: or, Contemporary Portraits* (1825) Hazlitt praises Wordsworth as 'a pure emanation of the Spirit of the Age' and 'one of the innovations of the time' which 'partakes of, and is carried along with, the revolutionary movement of our age'.[25] Hazlitt seems to agree with Wilson in suggesting that Wordsworth's 'dereliction of

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[20] John Wilson (Christopher North, pseud.), "Wordsworth's Sonnets and Memorials", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 12 (August 1822), pp. 186-87.
[21] The 1802 'Preface', 754.
[22] Jon P. Klancher, *The Making of English Audience, 1790-1832* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 57.
[23] Wilson, *Blackwood's Magazine*, pp. 186-7.
[24] See The 1802 'Preface', 753.
[25] Hazlitt, XI, p. 87.

his first principles' of the enlightenment of all social classes led him to turn to his 'later philosophical productions'.[26]

In the last twenty years of his life Wordsworth became more well-known as a guide to a virtuous society. In 1831 a schoolmaster named John Hine published *Selections from the Poems of William Wordsworth, Esq. Chiefly for the Use of Schools and Young Persons.* For its 'simplicity' and deep sympathy with 'all parts of God's creation' Hine regarded Wordsworth's poetry as eminently appropriate not only for young people but also for self-educated adults.[27] In July 1841 Wordsworth received a letter from John Simon, the medical tutor at King's College:

> Instruction in all, which it chiefly behoves to know - humbler reliance in the Divine rule - fuller love of Man - deeper & holier sympathies with Nature - in success, self-diffidence - in trial & suffering the stay and comfort of religious wisdom - are lessons which I, in common with thousands, owe to those works.[28]

Simon seems to have echoed the themes of *The Recluse* - 'Man, Nature, and Society' - in the 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse.* As I suggested in my fourth chapter, Wordsworth's contributions to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* experimented in his views of 'Man, Nature, and Society'. However, what the readers of the 1830s and 1840s received from Wordsworth's poems were not materials for consideration but 'lessons'. Simon's letter suggests that Wordsworth's '[i]nstruction' was more prophetic than it had been in the 1820s. While Wordsworth's experiments in the enlightenment of the reader in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* were not fully understood even by those of literary talents, his 'lessons' of 'the Divine rule', 'Man', and 'Nature' in his later productions were admired by 'thousands' of people. As he had hoped in 1808, Wordsworth was known as a 'great Poet' and 'Teacher' in his later years, though his means of teaching was no longer encouragement but '[i]nstruction'.

As Gill states, Wordsworth's most important statements about education were not known to the public until the posthumous publication of *The Prelude* in July 1850. However, this thesis, I hope, has suggested that Wordsworth demonstrated and practised his ideals of education through his

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[26] Hazlitt, XI, p. 90.
[27] See Richardson, p, 263.
[28] John Simon to Wordsworth, 2 July 1841; quoted from Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians,* p. 15.

political and literary activities in the years 1791 - 1802. As early as June 1802 Wordsworth turned from the ideals of the progress of human improvement, which he had constructed since his first contact with the British reform movement in January 1791. In this sense I take June 1802 as the end of Wordsworth's engagement with the progress of human improvement through the enlightenment of the individual and also as the beginning of his instruction concerning the Divine, Man, and Nature.

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